THE RELIGION OF THE NABATAEANS

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THE RELIGION
OF
THE NABATAEANS

A Conspectus

BY

JOHN F. HEALEY

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

To Elizabeth
Without whom not

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FOREWORD

The idea of writing a monograph-length account of Nabataean religion arose from my earlier work of 1993, *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Mada'in Salih*. While researching details of those inscriptions, I became aware of the need for a coherent account of the religion of the Nabataeans, in so far as it could be composed from the fragments, textual and artefactual, which survive. This necessarily involves an element of imaginative reconstruction, based on the surviving evidence but informed by analogy. A comprehensive account of every scrap of actual or possible evidence would be long and tedious. It might also fail completely to give any overall impression of the character of Nabataean religion. I have therefore restrained my natural instinct to recite every minor detail and cite every secondary source.

Research in this field involves both inscribed and uninscribed artefacts, as well as attention to literary sources and archaeology. Collaboration between scholars in different disciplines is essential. I have chosen, however, to make the texts, literary and epigraphic, the foundation of this book and I hope that this bringing together of all the most significant texts on Nabataean religion will be complemented in the future by publications more focused on iconography and archaeology.

The archaeology of the Nabataeans is a specialism of its own, and I am happy to acknowledge the work of so many field archaeologists, which has been invaluable to me. So far as iconography is concerned, in many ways much more central, I have been conscious of the expertise of colleagues whose work on the topic has been so significant and is frequently cited below. I was unfortunately not able to consult the important recently published book by L. Nehmé and F. Villeneuve (1999), information of which reached me while I was putting finishing touches to my manuscript.

Specifically I would like to thank the following scholars who have helped me in relation to particular aspects: Professor G. Rex Smith, Professor David Bain, Mr Peter Parr, Dr Robert Wenning, Professor Philip Hammond, Professor Suleiman al-Theeb, Mr Michael Macdonald, Professor Sergio Noja, Professor Giancarlo Lacerenza, Dr Glenn Markoe, Dr Hatoon al-Fassi, Mr Sattar Izwaini. To Professor Joseph Patrich, Dr Judith McKenzie, Dr Robert Wenning, Professor

Philip Hammond, Jane Taylor and Dr Kay Prag I owe a great debt of gratitude for permission to reproduce their photographs and figures. In addition the John Rylands University Library in Manchester has been an irreplaceable resource.

At earlier stages of my research I received financial support from the University of Manchester Research Support Fund and the British Academy, but particular thanks are due to the President and Fellows of St John's College, Oxford, who welcomed me warmly and generously as a Visiting Scholar of the College during the final stages of my work on this volume.

John F. Healey
Manchester, January 20, 2001

ABBREVIATIONS IN TEXT

CAD	*Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (followed by volume and inscription number)
CIS	*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* (followed by volume and inscription number)
DN	Divine Name
DNWSI	Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995 (see Bibliography)
H	Healey 1993 (followed by inscription number; see Bibliography)
Inv.	*Inventaire des Inscriptions de Palmyre*
JS I, II	Jaussen and Savignac 1909 and 1914 (see Bibliography): Nabataean inscriptions unless specified as Lih(yanite)
Lane	Lane 1863-93 (see Bibliography)
LCL	*Loeb Classical Library* (texts quoted with name of editor and translator)
LS	Liddell and Scott 1940^9 (see Bibliography)
PAT	Hillers and Cussini 1996 (see Bibliography)
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
PN(N)	Personal Name(s)
RES	*Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique*
TS	Payne Smith 1879-1901 (see Bibliography)

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION OF NAMES

Many of the Arabic place-names cited in Nabataean studies have well established though not always consistent Latin-script spellings (for example, with *-eh* or *-e* for the feminine nominal ending rather than *-ah* and *el-* for the definite article rather than *al-*). To impose consistency would make names difficult to recognize and in general contexts traditional spellings have been retained. For example, we use "Khazneh" (rather than *Ḫaznah*), "el-Khubthah" (rather than *al-Ḫubṯah*) and "ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh" (rather than *ʿAyn al-Šallālah*). It is hoped that all place-names will be easily recognizable.

Transliteration of Nabataean and other Semitic words in an epigraphic or literary context follows normal conventions. In the transliteration of Nabataean personal and other names final long *-ā* is left unmarked ("Qaysha"), unless there is some specific reason to indicate it (as in "al-Kutbā").

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CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEMS OF METHOD AND A SURVEY OF SOURCES

When the last aged member of the priesthoods of Dushara and the other Nabataean gods and goddesses died, irretrievably buried with him was the religion of the Nabataeans. The fragments that survived, epigraphic and archaeological on the one hand, and in the literature of disapproving Christians and Muslims on the other, will never be sufficient to enable the modern historian of religion to reconstruct such a complex world of mythology, liturgical theory and moral theology. Only "scattered tesserae of a shattered ancient verbal mosaic" remain (Stetkevych 1996, x).

Nabataean religion did, however, have a religious context, or several religious contexts, of which we know a little more. It has connections with the religion of the Roman Empire, for example in the spread of the cult of Isis. More importantly it is to be seen against the variegated background of what we call the Ancient Near East, especially Syria, with the cult of Baalshamin and the fertility gods. But also noticeable in the Nabataean case is the background in pre-Islamic north Arabia, the religion of what the Muslims were to call the *Jāhiliyyah.* Of course, we know little enough about pre-Islamic Arabian religion and mythology despite valiant attempts to "read" it coherently (Chelhod 1954; Henninger 1954; Stetkevych 1996; al-Udhari 1997). But the information we have on Middle Eastern religion in the period from c. 500 B.C. to A.D. 600 presents us with what seems like the main stream of a broad and languid river, which from time to time and in different places splits into a multiplicity of side-channels, later reunited, and always moving in the same direction. It is this general flow in an established direction which assures us of being able to attain some coherence in our account of Nabataean religion. To revert to the image of the mosaic, even a few fragments may, if judiciously placed, enable us to reconstruct the whole picture on the basis of comparison with better known pictures.

Nabataean religion was one of the predecessors of Christianity and Islam in the southern Levant/Transjordan region. Both my Christian and my Muslim friends will, I know, be keen to emphasize the discontinuities that these two radical religions forced upon the religious history of the region. Between them the Christian and Muslim evangelists brought the world of the Nabataean gods to an end and their polemicists naturally treat it with contempt. The historian of religion on the other hand is more inclined to be struck by the fact that Western Asia was already showing signs of moving towards the fall of the idols before Christianity and Islam burst in turn on the scene. Each in its own way crystallized this trend, turning it into an organization with members. Each found its own way of rationalizing its connection with what had gone before. For the Christians what went before was Judaism and it appropriated the unknown god, Zeus the Most High and the Unconquered Sun. For the Muslims there was acknowledgement that Islam was the original religion of mankind, that Ibrahim was a Muslim, that there were righteous monotheists (*ḥunafāʾ*) in Arabia before Muḥammad and that Allāh had given revelations to earlier prophets. Christianity was acknowledged as a dimmed light from the past. Allāh had been worshipped constantly by small numbers of faithful in earlier generations, but in the *Jāhiliyyah* had been improperly surrounded with associated intercessory idols like Hubal, Allāt, al-ʿUzzā and Manāt.

This is the context of the attempt to resurrect the last Nabataean priest from his grave. The attempt needs a certain creativity of thinking. Without that, all that we will be left with will be a recital of epigraphic and archaeological details. This book attempts to combine the statement of mere facts with a broader picture, painted imaginatively. The Nabataeans, after all, had their mythology, cultic theory and moral theology: of this we can be certain. Their religion or religions were as real to their adherents as any other religious affiliation of the ancient world.

Nabataean “Religion”

The practical problems posed by the limited nature of the sources of our knowledge of Nabataean religion may be thought to render marginal the discussion at length of theoretical frameworks for the study of religion. It is necessary, however, to say something about this, even if the “programme” of understanding and describing Nabataean religion we set ourselves is currently well out of reach.

The present writer’s approach to the study of religion is informed especially by the accounts of religion presented by Clifford Geertz

(1993 [original 1966]), Peter L. Berger (1967) and William E. Paden (1994^2 [original 1988]). Religion, on this view, is an aspect of culture, part of a social construction of reality which man treats as if it were external in origin. Societies and individuals construct the world about them. They order it and inhabit it. The historian of religion cannot enter into the question of whether there really is or was anything "out there" corresponding to this perceived reality. He or she can only suspend judgement on the issue. What is important to him or her is what a community believed, the nature of its rituals and how its beliefs changed, not whether its beliefs had metaphysical validity.

In the context of a particular society religion is a "system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (Geertz 1993, 90). Religious systems have a complex structure of constantly changing elements: changing from place to place and from time to time. Like other aspects of culture, religions are historically transmitted (Geertz 1993, 89) and the task of uncovering the details of the system under investigation and interpreting the "webs of significance" involved is, for non-contemporary religion, the task of an historian, though necessarily a historian with sensitivity to religious phenomena. In so far as it is the case that only fragments can be retrieved, the fragments of evidence are linked together to form a hypothetical reconstruction and explanation. These are, however, always open-ended and subject to revision in the light of new evidence (which is constantly appearing).

The Study of Dead Religions

Akkadian is a dead language and Babylonian religion is a dead religion. The analogy between language and religion is a useful one. A dead language is one of which there are no longer any speakers. The categorization of a language as dead may seem straightforward in some cases: Akkadian is dead, Ugaritic is dead. In other cases there may be more room for doubt because there is a stronger element of continuity: Classical Arabic survives in certain contexts, as Latin still survives in the Vatican.

There are religions which are dead in an analogous way. Ancient

Greek religion is dead, as well as Phoenician religion and Sumerian religion: there are no adherents of any contemporary religion which can really be regarded as connected substantially with Greek, Phoenician and Sumerian religion. Once again, some cases may not be so clear-cut: ancient Israelite religion, partly reflected in the Hebrew Bible (though for a fuller and more accurate historical picture it is necessary to use also contemporary inscriptions and archaeology), does have continuators. Modern Jews and Christians "own" the Hebrew Bible (and thereby a filtered and sanitized version of ancient Israelite religion). For both groups the congregational reading of passages from the "Old Testament" (as the Christians call it) plays an important part in regular cult. But in both cases there is an argument which can be made for the view that they are not adherents of the same religion as that adhered to by Isaiah and Jeremiah.

In the case of the Christians this is more obvious: the extent of reinterpretation and innovation, the differences of belief and ritual (though these should not be exaggerated since they mostly hinge on the question of whether the expected Messiah has come). In a sense, there is more continuity between ancient Israelite religion and modern Judaism (still awaiting the Messiah — though the extent to which an eschatological Messiah is presented in the Old Testament is open to dispute), but in a descriptive account there would again be a strong case for discontinuity, for regarding modern Judaism as a different religion. For a start ancient Israelite religion was largely focused on the Temple and the Royal Family: both have disappeared; observances given central importance in modern Judaism such as circumcision and sabbath were not, so far as the historian can judge, central in ancient Israelite religion; the Mishnah and the extensive literature which arose from it, which play a quite central role in later Judaism, came into existence after A.D. 200.

Why is the difference between living and dead religions important methodologically? The answer is the same as in the case of dead languages *v.* living languages. With living languages and living religions we have the possibility of a virtually infinite resource in our attempts at understanding: we can observe or question native speakers and members of the faith community. With dead languages and dead religions we have a database which is finite and which does not and cannot in principle answer all the complicated questions we might want answered. It may be difficult for an outsider to understand or adequately describe a living religion, but in the case of a dead religion, however apparently abundant the sources, there is no possibility at all of doing anything but scratch the surface.

The reason for this lies in the nature of religion. As we have already suggested, religions are phenomena constituted by the systematic interaction of a large number of variables in different spheres, interrelated sets of practices and beliefs which create "religious worlds".

It is instructive to consider the difficulties the outsider has in understanding even a "well-known" religious world such as that of Catholic Christianity. It is not enough to examine all the ecclesiastically authoritative and theologically normative texts: indeed these are arguably very peripheral to the Catholic religious world "as lived and experience by adherents". One would also have to observe ritual and related pious practices and study iconography. If, after some cosmic catastrophe, only sacred texts like the Roman Missal survived, the interpretation of Catholicism which would emerge would probably be utterly inadequate. When attending a Catholic Mass there is an immense amount of symbolic meaning "carried" by oral tradition and in the communal consciousness which is not explained in the liturgical texts.

Imagine, therefore, the difficulties in studying Sumerian religion or Ugaritic religion. In both of these we are fortunate to have quite extensive mythological texts and a limited range of liturgical texts, but fundamental uncertainties remain which mean that only fragments of the respective religious worlds of the Sumerians and Ugaritians can be recovered. For example, it is not clear, despite the mythological and ritual texts, whether Ugaritic religion was focused on the renewal of the agricultural year: a case can be made for this, but certainty could only be reached if we were lucky enough to recover texts or other evidence directly concerned with this issue. If Ugaritic religion still existed, we could resolve the question quickly by asking questions of live adherents.

And so we turn to the study of the religious world of the Nabataeans. The number of inscriptions and other pieces of evidence seems quite large, but the sources are completely inadequate for the task of reconstructing anything so intrinsically complicated as a religious world. The analogy of the fragmented mosaic is nowhere more appropriate and anything that is concluded must be concluded on a provisional basis, awaiting further light from new discoveries.

It is our hope one day to be able to describe and understand this religious world: for the moment all we can do is discuss small sections of the mosaic, without having a great deal of confidence whether the pieces of it we describe belong in the centre of the picture or at its periphery or how the pieces we possess are linked to each other. Methodologically, however, we are committed to the view that there is a system at work, that in principle it would ultimately be possible to give a coherent account of Nabataean religion and compare it with contemporary religions of the region and other religions.

Paden (1994^2, 69-159) focuses on four main areas of concern within religious worlds: myth, ritual and time, gods and systems of purity. As will become clear, the pieces of the Nabataean mosaic available to us are not evenly distributed over these topics. We know virtually nothing about Nabataean mythology, little about Nabataean ritual, understanding of time and systems of purity. By far the biggest topic in what follows will concern the gods. However, we are fortunate in having at least some evidence from closely related cultures which enables us to propose some reasonable hypotheses on areas of religion which are not directly attested. The fragments of evidence are linked together to form a hypothetical reconstruction and explanation.

The difference between a study like the present one and most projects in the writing of religious or secular history is that the relative proportions of the known and the unknown are different. In writing about the Reformation the fundamental picture is clear from a mass of data, while refinements or new interpretative frameworks are what historians aim for. A good example would be Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars* (1992). For the Nabataeans we currently only have scraps of evidence and even the most fundamental data which is taken for granted, for example in the study of ancient Greek religion or the religion of ancient Israel, is lacking. There is no continuous native account of any aspect of Nabataean religion written by a Nabataean; there is no account of Nabataean cult; there is no surviving Nabataean mythology. And even in relation to the main deities worshipped by the Nabataeans, Dushara and his partner Allāt/al-ᶜUzzā, we have very little idea of the nature and characteristics of the deities concerned. We are not even sure, as we will see, whether one of the main Nabataean deities is male or female.

What can be written, therefore, has to remain provisional and also has to depend to an unusual and somewhat unsatisfactory extent on comparison with better-known contemporary or near contemporary religious cultures and on the cautious use of analogy.

There is considerable danger of gross error. If Strabo who was a contemporary of the great Nabataean king Aretas IV (9 B.C. - A.D. 40) could so misunderstand Nabataean attitudes to the dead that he believed the Nabataeans had no regard for them, we in the 21st century are in a much more precarious position, since we are dealing with extremely fragmentary materials none of which is wholly self-explanatory. We must attempt to guard against this by distinguishing carefully between what is known through direct evidence, however slight that is, and what is hypothesized on the basis of comparison and analogy.

In this work the main emphasis is placed on the direct evidence. To some extent we can make careful use of secondary sources of information, notably the information provided by Greek, Latin and Arabic sources, most of which are the products of observation by outsiders whose understanding of what they describe or have been told by intermediaries is often inadequate. There are, however, a few sources of this kind which, if not written by Nabataean insiders, at least have authors who belonged culturally to the same Hellenized Middle East as the Nabataeans.

So far as contemporary religions are concerned we are reasonably well informed on Judaism and its sects (including Christianity) and on Hellenistic Middle Eastern religion. Also important is the fact that while data on Nabataean religion are rather limited, the Nabataean Aramaic inscriptions belong to a broader cultural milieu which is better known, that of all the other types of late Aramaic inscriptions (and other data): Jewish, Palmyrene, Edessan, Hatran. It appears that Palmyra and Edessa at least were much more affected culturally than Nabataean religion is by both Hellenism and Iranism. On the other hand, in the Nabataean case there is clearly also a connection with the religious traditions of the Arabian peninsula, and on these we are surprisingly well informed by native sources (Lihyanite, "Safaitic", etc. in the north and Epigraphic South Arabian in the south), as well as by Islamic-period authors interested in the religion of Arabia before the advent of the Prophet. The Arabic sources are fundamentally polemical, i.e. they are basically hostile to the *Jāhiliyyah*, though they often contain snippets of information which are useful and they do have the merit of coming from the same north Arabian cultural and religious milieu as the Nabataeans themselves (on the normal view of Nabataean origins).

Taken together, these various sources reveal certain common elements and even common religious formulae. Clues that we have from one source can form a reasonable background for our attempts to understand another. A good example of this is provided by the way that Palmyrene iconography suggests the survival at Palmyra of a version of the ancient Marduk-Tiamat conflict mythology (Dirven 1997). The iconography strongly suggests that a version of the myth was still current, though there is no direct textual evidence. The nearest we have in writing is the fact that one of the major gods of Palmyra was Bel and that Bel was a traditional name of Marduk. Equally it is clear that ancient Mesopotamian divine names (and presumably some characteristics of the ancient gods) survived. Any assumption that such a mythology existed among the Nabataeans would, however, be speculative (though they must have had some mythology!), since, as we will see, there is only the slight evidence of the Nabataean calendar on which to base such an assumption.

But the picture is not completely negative. In certain limited spheres there is an abundance of evidence. There are, for example, thousands of Nabataean inscriptions and graffiti providing a considerable corpus of religious formulae, as well as an enormous database of personal names, many of which have religious implications (though it is not always easy to be certain what significance is to be attached to personal names). These materials may give us some clues on Nabataean personal piety.

For example, there is the extremely common type of inscription introduced by the formula "Remembered be ..." (*dkyr*). The inscriptions in question frequently suggest that the named person is to be commemorated in the presence of a particular god and they imply a religious attitude of dependence on particular deities which is very revealing (Healey 1996). On a more official level there is the series of inscriptions in which a dedicant makes an offering of a statue or other artefact to a deity "for the life of" some person of importance, often a king or royal official. Here again a certain religious attitude is implied which reveals particular features of Nabataean (and other) religiosity (Dijkstra 1995). There are also the tomb texts. Indeed, most of the substantial Nabataean inscriptions are funerary in character. These inscriptions are highly informative from a number of points of view (names and dates of kings, family structures and the position of women, property law and inheritance) including on religious beliefs and attitudes.

It is thus possible, by the use of comparison and analogy, to arrive at some sort of picture of Nabataean religion. A more complete account will only become more possible with the recovery of Nabataean religious literary or cultic texts.

"Nabataean" Religion

Despite and because of the paucity of the evidence we must establish a reasonably clear definition of the scope of what we mean by "Nabataean" in the context of religion. The term Nabataean refers narrowly to the Nabataean kingdom which disappeared as a political entity in A.D. 106. The Nabataeans themselves did not disappear overnight, and indeed we have evidence of individuals still calling themselves Nabataean much later. It is reasonable to assume (and there is some evidence) that the Nabataean subjects who became inhabitants of the Provincia Arabia did not immediately change their way of life. In so far as there was no physical disruption in the changeover, it must be the case that to a considerable extent the priesthood and cults which existed in 105 continued to operate in 106, with the important change of the loss of the king, since religion and the royal family were closely connected, and, presumably, the introduction of the Roman state into religious affairs.

There are three explicit instances of a Nabataean calling himself a Nabataean (Knauf 1989, 56-57). These are a Greek inscription (reading not 100% certain) from Roman period Namara written by "Mushammar...a Nabataean", a "Safaitic" inscription in which an individual is described as *hnbṭy*, "the Nabataean", and an inscription from Palmyra of A.D. 132 in which a cavalryman describes himself as "A Nabataean (*nbṭyʾ*) of the Rawāḥ tribe." The juxtaposition of the term Nabataean with a tribal term may suggest that for the individual concerned there was a hierarchy of allegiance. His tribe was Rawāḥ, but he had another allegiance as a Nabataean. He is specific about all this because he is erecting an inscription in a foreign environment, Palmyra.

The oddity is that in all three cases the Nabataean state had already vanished, so the term Nabataean no longer referred to the kingdom, but rather to the Nabataean "nation" which continued to exist. Bear in mind that the Nabataean state had survived for hundreds of years and its defeated people would not drop their Nabataeanness quickly: there are plenty of modern parallels of colonized peoples retaining their national consciousness after political independence has been lost.

When someone calls himself a Nabataean in A.D. 132, as did the cavalryman of the Palmyrene inscription, it must have had a meaning quite different from what a similar soldier would have meant in A.D. 100. Indeed it may seem surprising that individuals called themselves Nabataean at all. Was there a lingering hope for a national revival, or had the term come to have a vaguer cultural meaning ("I am of Nabataean origin, Petra was once the centre of a great kingdom, you should take your holidays there — it's fabulous; along with my brothers I have a Nabataean name and we will try to preserve our distinctness")?

There are two markers which have in scholarly tradition been used to identify Nabataeans and therefore are often regarded as typically Nabataean and diagnostic, the Nabataean fineware pottery and the Nabataean script. There is no doubt that both of these features are very distinctive and there is no doubt that there is some connection between them and the people known to history as the Nabataeans. However, closer examination of the situation reveals some serious difficulties.

The Nabataean fineware continued in production into the third century A.D. over a wide geographical area (Dijkstra 1995, 39). The "Nabataean" script is found in use in a great landmass from Egypt to southern Syria to northern Arabia, with a clear focus on southern Jordan (see Map 1). Like the pottery, it did not disappear with the Nabataean state, but continued in use. The latest dated inscription using it is from the fourth century A.D., and it is a widely held view that it must have continued longer in day-to-day use on papyrus (since the Nabataean script lies at the origin of the script of the early Arabic papyri of the seventh century). Most of the inscriptions in Nabataean script from Sinai and many of those from the Ḥawrān are post-Nabataean and were written by peoples of a quite different tradition.

It is also clear that the inhabitants of the Nabataean state, which did not extend continuously and without interruption over the whole territory referred to above, were by no means homogeneous. Negev's research on the Nabataean personal names (1991a) reveals a very strong local flavour to the name traditions in the different areas. Despite some hesitation about the way the data are presented, we may note that out of over 1200 names only c. 20 are found in all four of Negev's Nabataean regions — and this includes royal names, which naturally would occur in dating formulae, etc. — and only c. 50 in three regions.

The lack of homogeneity reveals itself also to some extent in other aspects of the Nabataean inscriptions. There is a clear linguistic differentiation to be made between inscriptions from Petra and those from northern Arabia. The latter display features, both in lexica and syntax, linked to Early North Arabian dialects such as Lihyanite and Classical Arabic. Certain deities appear only in certain areas. Baalshamin is essentially a Syrian deity and this is reflected in his appearance mostly in the north. We find reference to the Arabian deities Manāt and Hubal only at Ḥegra. Indeed the Ḥegra inscriptions contain explicit reference to the alliance which had been made between the Nabataeans and the Shalamians and this does not appear in inscriptions elsewhere.

The Nabataean kingdom appears to be the product of alliances, with the elite of the Nabataean "tribe" acting as a ruling class (Knauf 1986; Dijkstra 1995, 42-44). The political domination of the Petra-based Nabataeans over a wide area resulted in the spread of the Nabataean script and dialect (and pottery) but the underlying populations appear to have been diverse, with their own linguistic and religious traditions. In this case it may be asked whether there is any such thing as "Nabataean Religion"?

The answer adopted here is positive and based on two important considerations. Firstly, there is clearly enough evidence, epigraphic and archaeological, from the central Nabataean territories, Petra, Wādī Ramm and (less certainly) Khirbet et-Tannūr, datable to the period of the Nabataean kingdom, i.e. prior to A.D. 106, to allow us to be certain that the Nabataean kingdom did have its own constellation of religious values. But secondly there is fortunately a kind of safety-net in place which can give us confidence to proceed in this topic. This is the fact that there was in the Greco-Roman Middle East a considerable degree of cultural uniformity in many aspects of religion, even between quite diverse ethnic groups. There is also much that is common in terms of religious architecture, tendencies to monotheism, attitudes to the dead, etc. Our judgement is, therefore, that provided discretion is exercised with regard to the information provided by remote and eccentric sites, we can in principle at least attempt to draw a picture of Nabataean religion.

However, it is clear that certain bonds which constituted the

Nabataean kingdom were lost after A.D. 106. Remote areas may have quickly ceased all effective contact with the metropolis of Petra; some simply went their own way under the weight of pressures from surrounding populations; others quickly found new focuses for their loyalty in urban centres which had their own ancient tradition. Within a short time, though not overnight, the concept of Nabataeanness must have changed, even if it took a long time to disappear.

The focus of this book is the Classical Nabataean religious tradition of the Nabataean kingdom. Inevitably, because of the scanty nature of the evidence, we will from time to time cite inscriptions from the post-Classical period (after A.D. 106 and often from the Ḥawrān which is in many ways the area most open to extraneous influences). We will also, for lack of better sources, have to make use of the secondary literary works and other epigraphic corpora cited above, but in all discussions it is the evidence, whether epigraphic, iconographic or archaeological, of religion in the *Nabataean Kingdom* which is our prime concern. Specifically, the use of other sources of these kinds does not mean that we are lumping all materials to which the term "Nabataean" is attached (especially the script) together or treating the products of neighbouring traditions as a uniform cultural whole.

Within the collection of materials labelled "Nabataean" by epigraphists and archaeologists the Classical Nabataean situation is probably the only one which could be described and discussed as a coherent whole. There is just about sufficient material in the different categories to make it realistic to try to say something about Nabataean religion in this narrower sense. We have a limited body of inscriptions (limited compared with the thousands of inscriptions of later date from Sinai and the tens of thousands of inscriptions of uncertain date in Safaitic script) with a clear historical context within the Nabataean polity. We also have a limited supply of more or less contemporary reports by writers in Greek. These say less about religion than we would like, but they do report on other aspects of Nabataean society. We have a body of archaeological data, especially for the 1st century A.D., which can be treated in a coherent way and on which the archaeologists are in a large measure of agreement. We have the iconography of representations of divine figures either associated with inscriptions or datable on the basis of archaeological argument.

The Transformations of Nabataean Religion

The transformation of the Classical Nabataean religion of the Nabataean state into the post-state, colonial religion of first the Romans and then the Byzantines is central to the study of Nabataean religion because this transformation is reflected in the sources. Peter L. Berger in *The Sacred Canopy* (1967, 45-46) uses in his own context the illuminating example of the Spanish destruction of the pre-Colombian Inca society and religion of Peru. In this case colonization radically and rapidly replaced all the societal supports which maintained the Inca religious "world". When the Romans annexed Nabataea there must have been a similar, though perhaps less radical ideological disruption.

Our main point of contact with the disruptive effect of the annexation is through our knowledge of the Nabataean kingship. Not only was it central to the independent Nabataean state, it also played a central role in religion. As we shall see, with the oft-cited Nabataean cult of dead kings we may not be on entirely secure ground. More central, and indisputably secure, is the notion of Dushara as the dynastic god, "the god of our lord the king".

Now there are considerable difficulties in characterizing Dushara, despite his obvious importance, but one of the few certain things about him is that he is specifically the god of the royal house. It follows that the disappearance of the royal house, perhaps even more than the relationship with Rome, cast Nabataean religion adrift in so far as one of the main anchors of the main deity was lost. Dushara's role in classical Nabataean religion, so far as we can tell, was not like the role of Allāt and al-ᶜUzzā and Manāt and Shayᶜ-al-Q̰awm, who were worshipped quite widely and play a prominent role in other religious worlds, such as those of Palmyra and Edessa and of the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. Their cults could and did continue in an adjusted context, the context of the religious world shared by all the Aramaic-using (and some of the Greek-using) peoples of the Late Antique Middle East. Manāt even spread westwards with the Roman army. No, Dushara was in a much more vulnerable position, vulnerable to political change. The loss of Dushara's role as god of the king must have been as traumatic as the loss of the Temple in Judaism.

On the other side of the balance, preventing complete disruption of the religious world of the Nabataeans in A.D. 106, was not only the fact that there was much in the religious world of the Nabataeans which was shared with others, Arabs and the Aramaeans, but much that was broadly compatible with the religion of the Roman conquerors. Dushara could survive, not as a Nabataean national god — indeed in the little evidence we have of Nabataean ethnic identity in the provincial period, the only god associated with the post-Nabataean Nabataeans is not Dushara but Shayᶜ-al-Qawm — , but as a local god of the people who inhabited the former Nabataean territories. Under Roman control and in a new context Dushara was refashioned and relocated in a new religious world, in which he was assigned various roles more normally associated with particular Greco-Roman deities. In the Ḥawrān he took on the role of Dionysos, Zeus and, as we discuss below, Helios. How far such identifications reflect real continuity with classical Nabataean Dushara is often unclear.

Syncretism or Assimilation

The new aspects of Middle Eastern religion which emerged in the post-Alexander period are traditionally spoken of in terms of "syncretism". The use of this term has been rightly subjected to severe criticism in recent discussion of Hellenistic and Roman cults (see Stewart and Shaw 1994; Pearson 1975, etc.).

The major criticism involved may seem trivial in the context of the discussion of a religious tradition as poorly understood as the Nabataean. It is essentially the argument that the term syncretism has tended to imply a random and unsystematic putting together of elements from different "pure" (i.e. non-syncretistic) religions, often under the influence of political circumstances which brought differing peoples into contact with each other. The term syncretistic is also used in a pejorative way within a frame of thinking about religion: there were the ancient pure religions, then these declined into syncretism prior to a renewal of pure religion. Adherents of the three monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam have been equally inclined to think this way about the religious context from which they emerged.

This way of thinking overlooks a number of essential points. Firstly, the implied randomness of religious elements amalgamated into the syncretistic cult is completely misleading. The new entities which make use of older traditions are systematic, not random, and to treat them as random associations of ideas is to belittle them unfairly. To quote Martin (1987, 10): "It is not useful to understand any coherently identifiable cultural form as grounded in superficial borrowings occasioned by circumstantial contact."

Secondly, the concept of a "pure" religion which is non-syncretistic is a highly suspect one. A religion is a constantly changing "web of significance", a "system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men..." (Geertz 1993, 90). It is hard to imagine a "pure" religion: such a term might be applied to the almost unchanging religion of a community totally isolated from outside contact, but this cannot apply to any known community or period in the Mediterranean or the Middle East. In a useful introductory essay to a wide-ranging discussion of syncretism, Stewart and Shaw note that "Syncretism has presumably always been part of the negotiation of identities and hegemonies in situations such as conquest, trade, migration, religious dissemination and intermarriage" (1994, 19-20).

We can, however, speak meaningfully of assimilation, acculturation and differentiation (Drijvers 1980, 17-18; Dirven 1999, xxi). The unusefulness of the term syncretism as a descriptive is well formulated by Drijvers (1980, 17-18), who refers to the poly-interpretable character of the religious culture of Edessa:

> What is usually called syncretism as a cultural entity is not a mingling of different elements into a strange cocktail, but simply this poly-interpretable character of a syncretistic culture which still functions as a unity. The word assimilation would, in fact, be a better designation of the cultural process usually phrased as syncretism. A culture assimilates other elements to its own tradition and pattern, but does not mingle or mix everything together.

In this context it is clear that the Nabataean version of north Arabian religion which came into contact with the Seleucid and Ptolemaic worlds and later had close ties with the Roman Empire underwent certain transformations. New features are assimilated and integrated, some traditional features are set aside or go out of fashion. But we must not forget either that Middle Eastern cults in general and Syro-Arabian cults in particular had a profound and permanent effect on Roman paganism (older work on oriental cults in the Roman world: Cumont 1956 [original 1909^2]; more recent: Turcan 1996). Transformations were taking place in both directions.

The transformation of Nabataean religion at the annexation is reflected not only in the inscriptions in the Ḥawrān, but also in the archaeology of Petra itself. For the city remained important, building work continued, a Roman governor had an elaborate tomb built for himself. But now, in the post-Nabataean phase, the temples were named after Greco-Roman gods — there was a temple of Aphrodite (as we know from the Babatha archive).

In summary, then, the highly distinctive world of the religion of independent Nabataea did not collapse dramatically (as in the Inca case), but lost its clearly defined political and social framework, while transforming itself into a less distinct version of the many religious worlds of the Romanized East. Petra became an important Byzantine centre with its own bishop, part of the highly theocratic religious world of Byzantium in which church and state acted as one. While it would be wrong to think of a rapid and total eradication of the earlier pagan world, the end result of Christianization was indeed a very radical one — a new religious world was created in which Arabia Petraea was merely a province of Christendom.

The Nabataean gods continued, however, to have worshippers well into the Christian period in north-west Arabia. We know little about the religious world of the *Jāhiliyyah*, though not as little as is often supposed, as is argued creatively (if not completely convincingly) by ᶜAbdullah al-Udhari (1997) in his reconstruction of the pre-Islamic Arabian creation myth. These Arabian religious worlds were centred on local cults which were in some sense satellites of major trading centres such as Mecca. In the Ka‘bah of Mecca Hubal had his place until the dawn of Islam, while daughters, Allāt, Manāt and al-ᶜUzzā, all three well attested in Nabataea, were associated with Allāh. Here in the Ḥijāz, after some hesitant steps, the Islam proclaimed by Muḥammad challenged these local religious worlds also in a very radical way, so that none of the old gods survived, while the pre-existing radical rejections of the old gods, Judaism and Christianity, were "domesticated", incorporated with an orderly and respectable position in the new world-view of Islam.

In what follows we will attempt to give a summary account of all of this, concentrating on the main deities and on clearly documented aspects of Nabataean cults, but we begin with a brief account of the sources.

The Sources

Epigraphic

Our main direct source of information is Nabataean epigraphy, inscriptions, whether formal or informal, left by the Nabataeans themselves. In principle these include inscriptions in Greek as well as in Aramaic, though it must immediately be noted that the Greek epigraphic material dated to the Nabataean kingdom is very slight, consisting of a handful of inscriptions from Petra, the Ḥawrān and, outside the Near East, Miletus, Cos, Delos, etc.

So far as Nabataean Aramaic is concerned, some of the epigraphy is dated either by an explicit date according to the regnal years of a known Nabataean king, or less directly by its connection with a particular archaeological or historical context.

As we have seen, "Nabataean" inscriptions appear over a fairly wide area of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, Syria and Saudi Arabia. Those connected with the Nabataean kingdom are Nabataean in the narrower sense. Many later inscriptions are called Nabataean because they use the Nabataean script rather than because there is any definite link with the Nabataeans.

In a recent article Macdonald (1998) has emphasized the "limitations of epigraphy" in the light of the difficulties created by accidental survival of materials from some places. It is often very difficult to know how representative a particular inscription is of the general situation in politics, trade or religion. Epigraphic evidence is most convincing when it is balanced by literary sources. Inscriptions may only give an illusion of direct contact with the population being studied: how far can we trust what authors put into their inscriptions? They might be putting on a public show which does not arise out of their own religious feelings and normal practices. Thus the "for the life of ..." inscriptions (above) which have a socio-political function may often have been written out of a sense of political duty rather than personal religiosity. It was the done thing to produce such dedications, but how much do they tell us about real beliefs?

Archaeological

Also providing direct evidence is archaeology. Nabataean archaeology has expanded dramatically in recent years, especially in Jordan and Syria, though also in Israel and slowly also in Saudi Arabia.

The most important sites which have produced evidence of Nabataean religion are described in Chapter III, but note may be made here of Petra, Wādī Ramm and Khirbet et-Tannūr in Jordan, the various sites in the Ḥawrān in Syria, the sites in the Israeli Negev, Sinai, Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ in Saudi Arabia. Newer work at Khirbet edh-Dharīḥ and in the Nile Delta may also be noted.

From these various sites comes a variety of items of evidence. Apart from inscriptions and coins the main contribution is in the reconstruction of the physical arrangements of sacred sites, mainly temples of different degrees of importance. There has also been considerable recent work on tombs, a characteristic Nabataean artefact.

Despite the growing body of evidence recovered by archaeologists there are some quite serious underlying problems of recognizing a religious or cultic site unless there is epigraphic evidence or unambiguous conformity to some established pattern of known religious significance. We will see that Nabataean temples can be recognized as such because of standard structural features, while certain other cult-sites require more careful consideration.

A useful discussion of the "Test Expectations" which, if fulfilled, would indicate a site to be cultic is provided in a completely different context by Alon and Levy (1989, 170-75, based on Renfrew 1985, 18-21). We will see that even in the absence of other evidence (inscriptions, building typology) most of the Nabataean sites traditionally identified as cultic would still be so interpreted. Thus we find sites which are set apart from normal activities, arrangements for public display and participation, secretive elements, images or places for images as the focus of power, special installations for ritual actions (altars, pits, basins), votive offerings, repeated symbolism relating to deities and a considerable investment of community wealth.

Literary

A brief review of literary sources is given by Zayadine (1989, 113-14). The main categories of material are in Greek, Latin and Arabic, but from time to time we will also make use of Syriac.

(i) Greek and Latin

We have already signalled the need for caution in the use of Greek and Latin sources, though it must be admitted that without these sources we would have little understanding of the Middle East in the Greco-Roman period. In general, however, it seems that the various Roman writers were better at getting right the details of historical events which involved the Roman armies than at describing religion in the region.

Of the Greek sources we will have occasion to cite, note may be made of the narrative accounts of Diodorus Siculus (d. 20 B.C.), the *Geography* of Strabo (d. c. A.D. 25) and the *Antiquities of the Jews* and *Jewish War* of Josephus (d. c. A.D. 97). Dijkstra (1995, 298-307) provides a critical evaluation of Diodorus and Strabo in the Nabataean context, and we will see that Strabo (or his source) misunderstands some aspects of Nabataean religion.

The anonymous Greek text of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (late 1st cent. A.D.) is unusual in being a purely practical document designed for use by merchant-seamen, while, at the other extreme, in the realms of speculative mythology mixed with what appears to be genuine information about the cult at Hierapolis (Membīj), is *The Syrian Goddess* of Lucian of Samosata (authorship uncertain; 2nd cent. A.D.). This work appears to give us a direct and fairly detailed account of the cult in the most famous of the Middle Eastern temples. While it has little direct bearing on Nabataea, its importance in a region which is so badly served by narrative sources cannot be exaggerated. And Atargatis, the goddess of Hierapolis, was worshipped at Petra and may have been identified with one of the main Nabataean goddesses. In a similar vein we have in Latin *The Golden Ass (Metamorphoses)* of Apuleius (b. c. A.D. 124). Again, this text is not directly relevant to Nabataea, but Isis, who is the focus of this work, was popular at Petra and the later sections of the book, describing the cult of Isis, reciting her titles and the details of initiation into her mysteries, again provide invaluable insights into the religious world in which the Nabataeans lived. Hammond (1996, 111-16) makes extensive use of Apuleius in reconstructing the cult on the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra. Also in Latin we may note the *Natural History* of Pliny (d. A.D. 79), though his relevance to religious matters is minimal.

As we move into the later era of both Christian and pagan writers we move away from the time of the Nabataean kingdom. Several Christian authors were, however, particularly interested in attacking pagan cults, many of which survived for centuries after Constantine. Particularly important is Eusebius of Casaraea (d. A.D. 339) in his

Ecclesiastical History and Epiphanius of Salamis (d. A.D. 403) in his *Panarion*. The latter includes in his "Medicine Chest" important comment on cults known to him in Alexandria and Petra. Of lesser importance are Tertullian (c. A.D. 160-225: *Apologeticum*), Porphyry (c. A.D. 231-303: *De Abstinentia* — on cult in northern Arabia), Arnobius (c. A.D. 300: *Adversus Nationes* — on betyls) and the fifth-century lexicographer Hesychius Alexandrinus. Jerome (c. 345-420), in his *Life of Hilarion*, gives some information on the formerly Nabataean city of Elusa.

Later Christian authors too give us snippets of information. Stephanus of Byzantium's *Ethnika* tells us about the deified king Obodas buried at ʿAvdat. Stephanus was a contemporary of Justinian (527-65). John Damascene (c. 655-c.750) includes comments on the pagan Arabs in his apologetic writings against Islam and other Byzantine texts allude to pagan Arab practices. And the tenth-century *Suda,* despite its late date, continues the encyclopaedic tradition and gives us a brief description of the Dushara cult at Petra.

(ii) Syriac and Arabic

The Syriac sources which provide us with useful information are few and several are in fact Syriac translations of works originally written in Greek, where the Greek does not survive. Into this category falls the Syriac text of Eusebius' *Theophania.* Otherwise in Syriac, much of the information we have comes to us in an apologetic context and can only be trusted in so far as the author is mentioning incidental information. We have sections of the works of Isaac of Antioch, the *Doctrina Addai* and numerous allusions to Middle Eastern paganism in the early apologetic literature.

Although the Arabic sources are all late in date (i.e. Islamic), they appear to reflect a genuine if limited interest in the pre-Islamic history and culture (especially religion) of north-west Arabia. The most useful are the *Book of Idols* of Hishām ibn al-Kalbī (d. 821) and ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Hishām (d. 833: *Life of the Prophet,* which contains the biography of the Prophet [*Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*] by Ibn Isḥāq [d. 768]). Krone (1992, 14-18) surveys the Arabic sources in the context of her study of Allāt and a useful summary of Arabic sources is found in the early part of Nicholson's *Literary History of the Arabs* (1930^2). Recently Hawting (1999, especially 88-110) has argued that writings such as that of Ibn al-Kalbī exaggerate the polytheistic beliefs of pre-Islamic northern

Arabia as part of the *tafsīr* tradition. Although this does not invalidate the usefulness of the snippets of information provided by such writers, we do have to beware, as Hawting points out, of the internal contradictions which can often be found in the Islamic accounts. Gods get ascribed to different tribes and locations in different sources or even within the same source (so on Dushara Hawting 1999, 122-25, Allāt 138-39, al-ᶜUzzā 139-40 and Manāt 140-41).

Apart from the direct evidence given by such sources as Ibn al-Kalbī, we also have the general analogy of ancient Arabian, especially north Arabian, religion (see compilations of data by Henninger 1981 and Fahd 1968). Ibn al-Kalbī and other sources indicate that ancient Arabian religion was predominantly astral in character. This is not a feature which is uniquely Arabian. Much of ancient Mesopotamian and ancient South Arabian religion is also astral. This fact cautions against any assumption of a special connection between non-sedentary populations and the worship of stars and planets.

Unfortunately the Arabic work ascribed to Ibn Waḥshiyyah purporting to be a translation from a Syriac original and called *The Nabataean Agriculture* (*al-Filāḥah al-nabaṭiyyah*), which contains quite a lot of information on religion as well as agriculture and plants has no connection with our Nabataeans. Rather, it is focused on Mesopotamia and gives some insight into residual pagan religion in the period of the 3rd to 5th centuries A.D. (Fahd 1998, 167-74; 1993).

Iconographic

Iconographic evidence is voluminous but fraught with interpretative difficulties. It is only rarely that we are able to connect an iconographic motif confidently with a particular deity or aspect of theology. There are, however, some important cases where this has been possible and they make a major contribution. Thus the iconography of Isis is so well known from other sources that there is little difficulty in identifying it in a Nabataean context. We will in due course discuss materials from the Temple of the Winged Lions and elsewhere at Petra. A little less certain is the inner-Nabataean iconography connecting the type of betyl with star-like eyes with al-ᶜUzzā and Atargatis, but it seems to be a fairly secure connection enabling us to recognize one of these goddesses wherever we find the motif.

Iconography has had a special role in tracing the transformation of Nabataean deities in the post-Nabataean period. Thus known

Dionysiac motifs were attached to Dushara. But it has proved much more difficult to be sure of iconographic types identified in the sculpture of the Qaṣr el-Bint temple at Petra and the temple at Tannūr. The same is true of terracottas (apart from an Isis terracotta): there is just not enough specific evidence to establish connections with individual deities.

The future potential of iconographic study of Nabataean material is great. A hint of what might in future be possible can be seen in the writings of authors like Hammond, Wenning, Zayadine and Parlasca (see Bibliography).

Onomastic

Because of the habit of incorporating divine names and attributes into personal names, corpora of names offer a potential source of information on the religious loyalties and piety of population groups and this has been exploited in several branches of the study of the Semitic world. There are, however, serious difficulties in interpreting the data and in the Nabataean case these are aggravated by other complicating factors.

First of all, as we have seen, the Nabataean script was very widely used and it is not always easy to discern whether an individual or even a whole community which used the script had much to do with Nabataean religion as practised at Petra. Secondly, the Nabataean name corpus extends over a long period of time and continues well after the end of Nabataea in the early second century A.D. Thirdly — and this is a general problem of onomastics — is the impossibility in most cases of being sure whether the parents who gave a name to a child were much concerned with the religious implications of the name. They were not trying to communicate theology and may often have chosen names because they liked the sound or because the name carried on a family tradition.

To these difficulties can be added in the Nabataean case the intractability of the material. The most recent corpus lists approximately 1250 names (Negev 1991a), but many are variants of each other and many repeat occurrences confuse statistics. Also the "family tradition" factor can easily distort the picture presented by statistics. Thus the masons at Ḥegra all belonged to one or two families with the names ʿAbdʿobodat and Wahballāhi traditional in the families. This gives an impression of the popularity of these names at Ḥegra which may be completely misleading. In some regions the number of surviving inscriptions is very large: Sinai is the most obvious case — thousands of graffiti containing little more than personal names. In other regions the data may be much more sparse. On Negev's statistics almost 330 of his 1250 names are found only in Sinai, Egypt and the Negev (his SEN), while a further 380 are found only in north Arabia (his NA).

Negev has made an advance on the other sources for Nabataean names by dividing the material regionally, though not (even roughly) chronologically. Macdonald's reservations about many details suggest that Negev's statistics cannot be entirely trusted (1999) and the older works of Cantineau (incorporated in his glossary: 1930-32) and al-Khraysheh (1986) are still useful. In fact much more analysis is needed which is beyond the scope of the present work. Negev's SEN category is particularly unsatisfactory in lumping disparate regions together. On the basis of these publications we can, however, note some very broad features which are probably significant.

The most glaring oddity is that only twice does the name Dushara appear as the divine element in theophoric names (ʿAbddushara, Taymdushara). We shall see in Chapter IV that the name Dushara is really an epithet of some kind and that the real name of the deity is to be looked for elsewhere. Without anticipating later discussion we may note, however, that there is no simple solution to this conundrum. One popular view is that the god behind the epithet Dushara is Ruḍā, but the latter name does not appear in the name corpus at all!

Other deities known to us through inscriptions also appear rarely in the theophoric personal names. According to Negev's figures Allāt appears in 7 names (e.g. Taymallāt), Q̰ōs in 4 or 5 names (e.g. Q̰ōsnatan), al-Kutbā in 4 or 5 names (not in Negev's summary; e.g. Taymalkutbā), and Manōtu in 5 names (mostly in northern Arabia, as one might expect in the light of the other epigraphic evidence; e.g. ʿAbdmanōtu). Unsurprisingly, given the cosmopolitan culture we are concerned with, more exotic deities appear occasionally: Isis (Amatisī), Nabu (Zaydnebo), Shamash (Shamashgeram) and Yithaʿ (Taymyithaʿu).

Almost certainly connected with the issue of the absence of Dushara is the frequent occurrence of certain other epithets or common noun elements filling the role of divine name in the theophoric names. Thus there are large numbers of names containing forms of the words for "god": *-ʾl*, *-ʾlh* and *-ʾlhy* (over 100 names; e.g. Amatallāhi), derivatives of the root ʿLY, meaning "high" or "most high": *-ʿly*, *-ʾʿly* (c. 15

names; e.g. Geramalᶜali), and the word for "lord": *-bᶜl*, *ʾlbᶜly* (c. 13 names; e.g. ᶜAbdalbaᶜali, which occurs an astonishing 274 times in SEN). It must be cautioned that further detailed attention needs to be given to the distribution of these over time and space. A large proportion are post-Nabataean and from Sinai. But it seems that there exists the possibility that in names like *ᶜbdlhy* and *grmʾlhy*, the deity being alluded to is one of the main gods, probably Dushara. Whether this implies a habit of calling Dushara "the God", "the Lord" or "the Most High" (in the same way that Allāt-Athena could be called "the great goddess" in the Ḥawrān) is not certain, but it could be that a process of abstraction was under way, with the main object of devotion of the name-givers being the high god who did not need to be specified by name. It is important, however, not to exaggerate this: as we shall see, dedicatory inscriptions frequently name Dushara and only one (doubtful and late) instance is known of a dedication to Ilāhā.

Conclusion

After all that has been said in this chapter regarding caution in reconstruction of the Nabataean religious world from the various "fragments" of the mosaic available to us, it is important finally to leave some room for imagination in our reconstruction. Indeed the very fragmentariness of the evidence demands imagination, a great effort to imagine this particular religious world. The imaginative move can only be made on the basis of an appreciation of lived religion. For we must never forget that what are to us scraps of damaged cloth formed for the Nabataeans part of a seamless robe (to change metaphor). In the case of the Nabataeans, as I stated at the beginning, there is little hope of ever having enough of the fragments of the structure (to change metaphor again) so that the architecture of the whole can be fully appreciated without constant rebuilding in the light of new data. The study of Nabataean religion is not like the study of pre-Reformation English Catholicism or Shiite Islam in modern Iran. But we can obtain a glimpse of what religion meant to a Nabataean, and on the basis of analogy with what is better known we can imaginatively elaborate the architecture. The rest of this book attempts to walk the tightrope between an overconfident reconstruction on the one hand and a minimalist recital of detail on the other. As an account of Nabataean religion it will need constant revision.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND: NABATAEAN HISTORY AND TRADE

Nabataean History

We cannot trace the earliest history of the Nabataeans as a whole or establish how the élite which ruled the state gained its control. No doubt this was effected through a combination of conquest and alliance (Knauf 1986). We can, for the present purpose, outline the facts which are established by clear literary and epigraphic evidence. There are several modern surveys of Nabataean history (Starcky 1966, cols. 900-24; Hammond 1973, 9-39; Negev 1977a; Bowersock 1983, 12-89; Millar 1993, 400-08; Wenning 1993a) and we limit ourselves here to a very brief account. More detailed references to secondary literature will be found in Healey 1993 (13-31).

The Nabataeans are called in Nabataean inscriptions *nbṭw/nabaṭu* and their origin is unknown (see recently Retsö 1999). Their earliest settlements were in southern Jordan and Palestine, though they may ultimately have come from the East, possibly from the marginal areas to the north of modern Saudi Arabia (see discussion of Graf 1990). An argument can also be made for the view that they are simply a later transformation of the earlier people of southern Jordan, the Edomites (Bartlett 1979; 1990). They are probably not to be associated with the *Nebayot/na-ba-a-a-ti/nbyt* of biblical/Mesopotamian/Taymanite sources (Abu Taleb 1984). Both the Nabataean inscriptions and later Greek sources associate them with another tribe, the *šlmw/šalamu* (Ḥegra inscriptions H 1:4; 8:9; 19:3; Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnika*, 550:12-13).

Greek writers, including Josephus, frequently call them Arabs, but there are considerable difficulties in the way this term is used in sources of the Roman period for the Middle East. In some contexts it has a very wide significance, referring to peoples in the fringe areas of the Fertile Crescent from Nabataea to Hatra. In others the term is very specific, referring to particular regions within established states: thus the kings of Edessa administered the desert region to their southeast with the help of a "governor of ʿArab". None of the ancient sources use the term Arab in the later significance it came to have in the Islamic period (see Drijvers and Healey 1999, 105-06; Dijkstra 1990).

There is also clear evidence (especially in the south of the Nabataean realm) of "Arabic" influence in the Aramaic used by the Nabataeans in their inscriptions (Cantineau 1930-32, II 177-80; 1934-35; O'Connor 1986; Healey 1995a) and an Arabian element in their tradition of personal names (Negev 1991a, *passim*, but see also Macdonald 1999; 2000, 47: personal names with clear "Arabic" elements are mostly concentrated in Sinai). As we will see later, the Arabian side of Nabataean religion is also clear. It is therefore arguable that they were of Arabian origin and had settled at some uncertain date to form a state (Healey 1989a, but note Millar 1993, 400 n.1). They used Aramaic for inscriptions because it had become, after the decline of cuneiform, the traditional language of culture in the Semitic world. A semi-nomadic social background is reflected in the Greek sources, which say that the Nabataeans did not build houses originally or drink wine and that they reared sheep and camels.

The most informative of the Greek writers concerned with the early Nabataean period is Diodorus Siculus (c. 80-20 B.C.) whose main source of information was the historian Hieronymus of Cardia who was, it appears, present in the Greek entourage during the events of 312 B.C. which first brought the Greeks into close contact with the Nabataeans (XIX, 100.1). There are various statements by Diodorus which reflect the lifestyle of the Nabataeans:

> They lead a life of brigandage, and overrunning a large part of the neighbouring territory they pillage it, being difficult to overcome in war. For in the waterless region, as it is called, they have dug wells at convenient intervals....and so they retreat in a body into this region out of danger (II, 48.1-2: trans. Oldfather 1935).
>
> There is also in the land of the Nabataeans a rock [πέτρα], which is exceedingly strong since it has but one approach, and using this ascent they mount it a few at a time and thus store their possessions in safety. And a large lake [the Dead Sea] is also there which produces asphalt in abundance, and from it they derive not a little revenue (II, 48.6).
>
> They live in the open air, claiming as native land a wilderness that has neither rivers nor abundant springs from which it is possible for a hostile army to obtain water. It is their custom neither to plant grain, set out any fruit-bearing tree, use wine, nor construct any house; and if anyone is found acting contrary to this, death is his penalty. They follow this custom because they believe that those who possess these things are, in order to retain the use of them, easily compelled by the

> powerful to do their bidding. Some of them raise camels, others sheep, pasturing them in the desert....the Nabataeans far surpass the others in wealth although they are not much more than ten thousand in number; for not a few of them are accustomed to bring down to the sea frankincense and myrrh and the most valuable kinds of spices, which they procure from those who convey them from what is called Arabia Eudaemon. They are exceptionally fond of freedom; and whenever a strong force of enemies comes near, they take refuge in the desert.... (XIX, 94.2-6: trans. Greer 1954).
>
> They...use as food flesh and milk and those of the plants that grow from the ground which are suitable for this purpose; for among them there grow the pepper and plenty of the so-called wild honey from trees, which they drink mixed with water (XIX, 94.9-10).

These reports give a fairly consistent picture of the Nabataeans, at least in their earlier history. Later they were undoubtedly much less nomadic, though there is the possibility, for example, that tents continued to be a popular type of housing even in the period when the Nabataeans were building elaborate temples and tombs.

The other major source on Nabataean culture is the *Geography* of Strabo (c. 64 B.C.-A.D. 25; trans. Jones 1930). He gives the following incidental information:

> Petra is always ruled by some king from the royal family; and the king has as Administrator [ἐπίτροπος] one of his companions, who is called 'brother'. It is exceedingly well-governed; at any rate, Athenodorus, a philosopher and companion of mine, who had been in the city of the Petraeans, used to describe their government with admiration, for he said that he found both many Romans and many other foreigners sojourning there, and that he saw that the foreigners often engaged in lawsuits, both with one another and with the natives, but that none of the natives prosecuted one another, and that they in every way kept peace with one another (*Geography* 16.4.21).
>
> The Nabataeans are a sensible people, and are so much inclined to acquire possessions that they publicly fine anyone who has diminished his possessions and also confer honours on anyone who has increased them. Since they have but few slaves, they are served by their kinsfolk for the most part, or by one another, or by themselves; so that the custom extends even to their kings. They prepare common meals together in groups of thirteen persons; and they have two girl-singers for each banquet. The king holds many drinking-bouts in magnificent style, but no one drinks more than eleven cupfuls, each time using a different golden cup. The king is so democratic that, in addition to serving himself, he sometimes even serves the rest himself in turn. He often renders an account of his kingship in the popular assembly; and sometimes his

> mode of life is examined. Their homes, through the use of stone, are costly; but, on account of peace, the cities are not walled. Most of the country is well supplied with fruits except the olive; they use sesame-oil instead. The sheep are white-fleeced and the oxen are large, but the country produces no horses. Camels afford the service they require instead of horses. They go out without tunics, with girdles about their loins, and with slippers on their feet – even the kings, though in their case the colour is purple. Some things are imported wholly from other countries, but others not altogether so, especially in the case of those that are native products, as, for example, gold and silver and most of the aromatics, whereas brass and iron, as also purple garb, styrax, crocus, costaria, embossed works, paintings, and moulded works are not produced in their country. They have the same regard for the dead as for dung, as Heracleitus says: 'Dead bodies more fit to be cast out than dung'; and therefore they bury even their kings beside dung-heaps. They worship the sun, building an altar on top of the house, and pouring libations on it daily and burning frankincense (*Geography* 16.4.26).

Some of this is plainly wrong, e.g. the idea that the Nabataeans treated their dead in a casual way. Clermont-Ganneau (1895) suggested that the confusion over burial in dung-heaps arose because the Greek for "dung", "dung-heap", κοπρία, κόπρος, etc., sounds like the Nabataean *kaprā*, "tomb". Others have sought an explanation in the practice of the exposure of the dead prior to secondary burial (Wright 1969). But there is sufficient convincing detail in Strabo to make his report useful. We will return later to the detail at the end of the last passage cited which is a rare literary reference to Nabataean religious practice.

The Nabataeans are first known acting as a group in relation to known historical events in 312 B.C., when they were encountered by Antigonus Monophthalmos. According to Diodorus Siculus (XIX, 94ff.), Antigonus sent one of his officers to attack the Nabataeans and he took booty from them in the form of frankincense and myrrh and five hundred talents of silver. This may have been partly a strategic move prior to an invasion of Egypt. After an initial surprise attack by the Greeks the Nabataeans pursued and defeated them. The Nabataeans then wrote to Antigonus, apparently in conciliatory tone, "a letter in Syrian characters [Συρίοις γράμμασι]". This is an important detail, showing that the Nabataeans even at this early stage were to some extent literate and that they were already using the Aramaic script and language. After lulling the Nabataeans into a sense of security tempered with some suspicion, Antigonus sent his son Demetrius on another expedition against them. Demetrius had little success and was persuaded by the Nabataean elders to make a treaty with them. Though Antigonus was not pleased, he apparently accepted this state of affairs.

In the mid-2nd century B.C. we find the Nabataeans interacting with the Jewish leaders, the Maccabees. Such encounters are mentioned several times in the *Books of Maccabees* (1 Macc. 5:25-6; 2 Macc. 12:10-12, etc.), but the reports are not very informative. Also giving much information on the Nabataeans' relations with the Jews, who were rivals of the Nabataeans for control of the former Seleucid territories of the region, is Josephus (c. A.D. 37-97+) in *The Antiquities*. Here we begin to find details of the names of Nabataean kings. Thus Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.), having in c. 93 B.C. attacked the Nabataean king Obodas I (c. 96-85 B.C.), was defeated by him (*Antiquities* XIII.375) and had to surrender Transjordanian territory (XIII.382). Again, in the wake of the defeat of Antiochus XII Dionysus (87-4 B.C.) at the hands of the Nabataean king Aretas III (84-62 B.C.), Alexander Jannaeus found himself under attack by the Nabataeans (Jagersma 1985, 91). At the death of Antiochus Aretas III even extended his kingdom to include temporarily the great city of Damascus (*Antiquities* XIII.392).

From the beginning of the 1st century B.C. Nabataean inscriptions begin to play a part in our historical reconstruction. An inscription from Elusa in the Negev probably refers to a King Aretas, Aretas I (c.168 B.C.) or Aretas II (c.120-96 B.C.) (Cantineau 1930-32, II, 43-4). The earliest dated inscription at Petra, from the Bāb es-Sīq *triclinium*, comes from the first year of Obodas I (Dalman 1912, 99-101: no. 90; *RES* § 1432). We thus enter a period in which the sources are sufficiently abundant for us to be able to reconstruct a detailed table of Nabataean kings. The chronology has undergone revisions and refinements in recent years and the simplified list which follows is based on that of Robert Wenning (1993a), to which reference should be made for details:

Aretas (*ḥrtt*) I	c.168 B.C.
Aretas II	c.120-96 B.C.
Obodas (*ʿbdt*) I	c.96-85 B.C.
Rabel (*rbʾl*) I	c.85-84 B.C.
Aretas III Philhellen	84-62 B.C.
Obodas II	62-59 B.C.
Malichus (*mlkw*) I	59-30 B.C.
Obodas III	30-9 B.C.

[pretender Syllaeus	9 B.C.]
Aretas IV Philodemos	9 B.C.-A.D. 40
Malichus II	A.D. 40-70
Rabel II	A.D. 70-106

The Nabataean kings also enjoyed successes in power politics particularly under Aretas III (84-62 B.C.) and Aretas IV (9 B.C.-A.D. 40). As we have seen, the former extended his kingdom to include, briefly, Damascus itself and in 82 B.C. he attacked the Jewish state, which was frequently a source of trouble for the Nabataeans.

The Nabataeans made strategic alliance with the party of Hyrcanus (who became Hyrcanus II [63-40 B.C.]) in the Jewish civil war which began in 67 B.C. in the hope of regaining Jewish-held Nabataean lands east of the Jordan (*Antiquities* XIV.14ff.; Jagersma 1985, 97). This strategy did not, however, succeed. Hyrcanus was at first defeated and then supported by the Romans, but in 62 B.C. the Nabataeans were forced into a treaty with the Romans, who were clearly envious of Nabataean commercial power (*Antiquities* XIV.80-1).

In 31 B.C., Herod the Great, at the instigation of Antony (urged on by Cleopatra, who had been given some Nabataean territory probably along the Gulf of Aqaba [Bowersock 1983, 41]), invaded the Nabataean territory in southern Syria/northern Jordan and after some reverses and with Roman help, established an enclave across the Jordan. According to Josephus (XV.159), Herod became "protector" of the Nabataeans.

Syllaeus, called "brother" of the king (Obodas III) in a Nabataean inscription in Miletus (Clermont-Ganneau 1906b; 1924a; Cantineau 1930-32, II, 46), was a central figure in the abortive campaign into Arabia of Aelius Gallus in 24 B.C. He tried to marry Salome, Herod's sister, to further his political ambitions (*Antiquities* XVI.220ff.). When Obodas III died Syllaeus (who had his own coins struck: Meshorer 1975, 36-40) attempted to gain the throne for himself, but Obodas was succeeded by Aretas IV, who was recognized by Rome (XVI. 294ff.). There is some evidence for the view that Aretas (originally called Aeneas) was not the obvious heir and had to consolidate his grip on power by political moves (see also on this al-Fassi 2000, 110-12).

Unsuccessful attempts were made to solve the problem of the rivalry between the Jews and Nabataeans by diplomatic marriages. Aretas' daughter, *šʿdt/šʿwdt*, was married off to Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee (4 B.C.-A.D. 39), but c. A.D. 27 he rejected her in favour of

Herodias, his half-brother's wife. The rejected Nabataean princess got wind of Herod Antipas' plan to dispose of her and got herself sent to Machaerus on the Nabataean border. Then:

> She was able to start for Arabia...., being passed from one governor to the next as they provided transport. So she speedily reached her father and told him what Herod planned to do (*Antiquities* XVIII.112: trans. Feldman 1965).

Aretas attacked and heavily defeated Herod Antipas, but in the process incurred the displeasure of Tiberius (XVIII.115). The Nabataeans were only saved from all-out Roman assault by Tiberius' death (A.D. 37).

Despite increasing Roman pressure and a possible interruption of his reign by the Romans c. 3-1 B.C. (Bowersock 1983, 55-56), major developments in the Nabataean state took place under Aretas IV (9 B.C.-A.D. 40), who used the title *rḥm ʿmh*, "lover of his people" (corresponding to the Greek title φιλόπατρις or φιλόδημος). He may have wanted to show by this title his nationalist feeling, since Aretas III had been called "lover of things Greek" (φιλέλλην). It may have been Aretas IV who introduced the dynastic cult in which, it is claimed, his ancestor king Obodas was divinized: this is discussed in detail below. Most of the significant buildings at Petra (the theatre, the Qaṣr el-Bint temple, probably the Khazneh, etc.) and other Nabataean sites come from this period. The economy was diversified and agriculture developed through the expansion of irrigation, partly in response to the decline of the trade routes to the south. For this period of the "Flowering of Nabataea", see in detail Bowersock (1983, 59-75).

Of Maliku II (A.D. 40-70) very little is known. He is the king referred to in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (below). There may have been some decline during his reign.

Rabel II (A.D. 70-106), his successor, who may have been a child at his accession (since his mother is named on his early coins), was called *dy ʾḥyy wšyzb ʿmh*, "he who gave life and deliverance to his people" (Greek σωτήρ), enjoyed a generally peaceful and prosperous reign. He appears to have halted temporarily the decline in the silver-content of the Nabataean coins which had been happening for a hundred years (Negev 1986, 27-28; Schmitt-Korte and Cowell 1989, 33-58; Khairy 1985). There is, however, some evidence of a decline of Nabataean power in the south, especially in northern Arabia, and a corresponding increase in activity in the north, especially in the

Ḥawrān (Negev 1977a, 637). It has even been suggested that Rabel transferred the capital to Bosra in Syria, which certainly became a major centre at this time (Bowersock 1983, 73).

Wenning has argued (1993b) for the idea that there was a nationalistic *renovatio*, also affecting religion, under Rabel II. The evidence is not strong, but as a hypothesis it has the benefit of explaining certain features of religious life at that time, a certain preference for traditional religious forms (betyls), the linking of divine names with the royal family ("the god[s] of our lord king ...") and the emergence of a kind of canon of deities.

But the conflict with the Romans was looming on the horizon and eventually in A.D. 106, possibly as a result of independent action contrary to Trajan's imperial policy, Petra and its domain were incorporated, apparently without a struggle, by Cornelius Palma, governor of Syria, into the Roman Province of Arabia, with its administrative centre at Bosra. The new era began on 22nd March A.D. 106 and Rabel II's son, probably the Obodas known to us from one of the Naḥal Ḥever documents (Yadin 1962, 239-40), never actually became king.

Petra remained a major centre, certainly for legal matters, though Bosra was the capital. Habitation of the city was unbroken and one of its finest monuments is the tomb of Sextius Florentinus, governor in A.D. 127. The Roman city produced at least two moderately important philosophers in the late 3rd century A.D., Callinicos and Genethlios, both mentioned in the *Suda* (Bowersock 1983, 135, nn. 51-52), and perhaps an author called Dousareios (Bernays 1885, 291-93). Eventually Petra became an important Christian centre, but it was extensively damaged by earthquake in A.D. 363.

Nabataean Trade (see Map 1)

Though they had some products of their own, notably bitumen (Bowersock 1983, 16; Hammond 1959), the prosperity of the Nabataeans rested on the crucial role they played in the overland trade routes from southern Arabia and the areas further east. The ancient caravan routes passed through the Ḥijāz to the Aqaba/Petra region and then westwards through Nabataean cities to Gaza and el-ᶜArīsh, or northwards to Damascus and on to the coast. Strabo gives a report on this:

> Now the loads of aromatics are conveyed from Leucê Comê [on the Red Sea] to Petra, and thence to Rhinocoloura [el-ʿArīsh], which is in Phoenicia near Egypt, and thence to other peoples.... (*Geography* 16.4.24: trans. Jones 1930).

Elsewhere Strabo refers to the direct route east from Petra to Babylon (16.4.2). Diodorus Siculus too mentions the Petran trade of the Gerrhaeans and Minaeans (III, 42.5), while Pliny (A.D. 23-79) says that

> At Petra two roads meet, one leading from Syria to Palmyra, and the other coming from Gaza (*Natural History* VI, 144: trans. Rackham, 1942).

However, the trading power of the Nabataeans was ultimately vulnerable because of the possibility of the transfer of trade to the Red Sea-Egypt and the Arab Gulf-Palmyra routes into the Roman world. The development of the former is explicitly referred to as an alternative by Strabo (16.4.24) and may be connected with the reports of some Nabataeans turning to piracy. The development of other routes contributed to the rapid decline of the Nabataeans after A.D. 106. The Petra-Gaza route was in decline from the middle of the 1st century A.D.

The Nabataean Regions

There was considerable variation in the different Nabataean regions (see general discussion in Millar 1993, 387-400). During the height of the Nabataean trade, colonies were established over a wide area and indeed some of the more distant areas of Nabataean settlement, such as the Ḥawrān and the Ḥijāz, have been very productive in terms of the discovery of inscriptions, including religious inscriptions. This, however, creates a considerable difficulty: the Nabataeans, like other Semitic peoples of this period (with the exception of the Jews), were inclined to create local versions of cults based on adaptation to local tradition. As noted already, such slight evidence as we have suggests that there was some considerable regional variation in the Nabataean realm. There is evidence of a variation in the name-giving traditions of different areas (though the arguments in this context often need to be refined: it only makes sense to compare contemporary materials and "Nabataean" names from the post-Nabataean period are no guide to the first century A.D.) More clear is the apparent concentration of devotion to certain gods, such as Hubal and Manāt, in the Ḥijāz. We may not have enough evidence to be sure, but there does seem to be some evidence of a regional distribution with regard to some of the deities, just as there is evidence of a heavier impact of Arabic on the Nabataean of the Ḥijāz.

We have already alluded to the fact that a number of texts associate the Nabataeans with another grouping, the Shalamu. The Shalamu are mentioned repeatedly in Nabataean texts from Saudi Arabia and may constitute one of the sources of local variation. The Ḥijāz is not, however, the only Nabataean region with seemingly distinctive religious features. There are distinctive features also in Sinai and in southern Syria. Unfortunately, however, in both these cases much of the evidence is later in date than the Nabataean state and not contemporary with the Ḥijāz material. This evidence is therefore difficult to map.

In the central region of Petra itself, perhaps the strongest feature of distinctiveness is found in the sanctuary of Tannūr (Chapter III and Map 1). Here we have the impression of a much closer assimilation to Greco-Roman religion and this is especially clear in the iconography. Naturally one would expect this area to be much more like the religious centres of Palestine and Lebanon, such as Heliopolis, and it is interesting to note that there is much less actual Nabataean epigraphy from Tannūr, despite the exhaustive excavations. Perhaps we should think of it as a westward-facing version of Nabataean faith, a point discussed further below.

Connections with Arabia

Apart from general points of contact with Arabia and the importance of the Arabian trade, there is also the fact of Nabataean political involvement in north-west Arabia. The most important Nabataean centre there was Ḥegra, later called Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ (Chapter III and Map 1). A fairly full account of what is known of the Nabataean history of this area is to be found in Healey 1993. Only extensive future excavations (and the publication of recent work) can add significantly to our knowledge of the region.

The first certain outside reference to Nabataeans in the area comes from the reign of Obodas III and is found in Strabo, who tells of Aelius Gallus' expedition against the Sabaeans in 24 B.C., motivated mainly by a wish to plunder their wealth. He sought the help of the Nabataeans:

> ....but he was deceived by the Nabataean Administrator [ἐπίτροπος], Syllaeus [i. e. *šly*], who....acted treacherously in all things...., misguiding him through places that had no roads....or along rocky shores that had no harbours.... After many experiences and hardships he arrived in fourteen days at Leucê Comê [Λευκὴ Κώμη] in the land of the Nabataeans, a large emporium, although he had lost many of his boats, some of these being lost, crews and all, on account of the difficult sailing, but not on account of any enemy. This was caused by the treachery of Syllaeus, who said that there was no way for an army to go to Leucê Comê by land; and yet camel-traders travel back and forth from Petra to this place in safety and ease.... (*Geography* 16. 4. 23: trans. Jones).

The expedition returned via the Nabataean port of Egra (evidently not Ḥegra, which is far from the coast). Syllaeus, who must have been acting as some kind of Nabataean military attaché, was beheaded much later in Rome (c. 6 B.C.) for this and other offences (*Geography* 16.4.24). He was accused of treason by Aretas IV and this may have been the real cause of his demise (*Antiquities* XVI. 296).

Nabataean Ḥegra was clearly well established by the date of the carving of the first Nabataean tombs there – the first dated 1 B.C./A.D. It evidently grew in importance during the reign of Aretas IV (9 B.C.-A.D. 40) to the extent that Ḥegra coins were struck in his reign (Meshorer 1975, 53-4). The texts give evidence of a large number of high-ranking military officers at the site in the middle of the 1st century A.D. (see Healey 1993, index) and this suggests that the site had a strong military aspect to it. The last dated tomb at Ḥegra (apart from the third century tomb of Raqūsh) comes from A.D. 74/75.

Ḥegra seems to have been the furthest major settlement of the Nabataeans' southern trade-route, though there is some evidence of Nabataeans further south (al-ʿUlā and Khaybar). We may note also evidence of Nabataean pottery, etc., from as far afield as Qaryat al-Fāw and Mārib (Wenning 1987, 126).

As we have seen (Strabo, above), ancient sources also speak of a Nabataean harbour on the Red Sea, called in Greek Leukē Kōmē, "white village". It is also mentioned in *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* in the following terms (Casson 1989):

> To the left of Berenicê, after a voyage of two or three runs eastward from Myos Hormos past the gulf lying alongside, there is another har-

> bour with a fort called Leukê Kōmê, through which there is a way inland up to Petra, to Malichus, king of the Nabataeans. This harbour also serves in a way the function of a port of trade for the craft, none large, that come to it loaded with freight from Arabia. For that reason, as a safeguard, there is dispatched for duty in it a customs officer to deal with the (duty of a) fourth on incoming merchandise as well as a centurion with a detachment of soldiers (*Periplus* § 19).

It is better to assume that a Nabataean officer is being referred to, not a Roman, despite his title, since all the Nabataean military and administrative titles were of Greek or Roman origin and indeed there was a Nabataean "centurion" at Ḥegra. The exact location of the port is still a matter of dispute. Its commercial importance is confirmed by Strabo: "....camel-traders travel back and forth from Petra to this place in safety and ease...." (*Geography* 16.4.23). Finally the king referred to is clearly Malichus II (A.D. 40-70).

These strong contacts with northern Arabia need to be understood within three distinct frameworks.

(a) Firstly, there is the fact of cultural links between the Levant and Arabia over a long period before (and after) the Nabataeans straddled the main routes of contact. There is plenty of evidence of a certain intensification of these contacts through an influx of "Arab" tribes in the Roman and Byzantine periods. Within this framework it is not surprising to find throughout the region, and not just in Nabataea, personal names of an Arabian type coming to prominence both numerically and in terms of political élites. In the same way "Arabian" deities begin to appear outside Arabia well before Nabataean times. The Assyrians transported local gods from Dūmat al-Jandal to Mesopotamia (Ephʿal 1982, 122; Knauf 1985a, 81-88). Han-ilat, an Arabian goddess with a distinctively Early North Arabian name, is mentioned on fifth century B.C. silver bowls from the Nile Delta (Rabinowitz 1956). Some Arabian cultural features in Roman Jordan may, therefore, have nothing specifically to do with the Nabataean presence.

(b) Secondly, the ruling élite of the Nabataeans – what proportion of the actual population of the Nabataean state we cannot tell – most probably had its tribal origins in northern Arabia and must have maintained to some extent its family and tribal traditions with regard to social and religious practices. So some Arabian cultural features may be a result of the fact that an Arabian tribe or family was in charge of the polity.

(c) Thirdly, quite apart from the above, the Nabataeans gained political control of the trade routes through northern Arabia and held them by military means, evidently forming alliances with peoples like the Shalamu and probably defeating the Lihyanites, since some Nabataean inscriptions of uncertain date suggest the Lihyanite kingdom was usurped by a Nabataean, Maᶜsūdu, a local leader from the north (JS II, 220-21: no. 334, 222: no. 337: *mᶜswdw mlk lḥyn*; Starcky 1966, cols. 906-7). This probably took place in the middle of the 1st century B.C. Thus north-west Arabia was, for over a century, part and parcel of the Nabataean state. It would, in such circumstances, be hardly surprising to find local linguistic and religious traditions of the Nabataean south reflected in official Nabataean inscriptions.

The ideal would be to assign Arabian cultural features to one of these three explanations, though obviously there are great difficulties. Some preliminary examples may be illuminating:

(i) The cult of Hubal and Manāt is restricted in Nabataean inscriptions to Ḥegra. The former is probably to be regarded as simply a local god. His cult did not spread at all and was not even current, so far as we can tell, among the Nabataean élite, despite its Arabian origins. He therefore clearly falls in category (c).

Manāt at first looks very similar, but the simplicity of the picture is complicated by the fact that this goddess, certainly of Ḥijāzi origin, was carried into Syria (Palmyra) and the Roman world by non-Nabataean Arabs. She seems, therefore, to belong to category (a).

(ii) The cult of al-Kutbā is quite widespread among the Nabataeans, but has a well-known background among the Lihyanites and the name has a distinctively north Arabian (Early North Arabian) form. It is not plausible, however, to suppose that the deity was introduced into Nabataea by conquered Lihyanites. It seems much more likely that it belongs to category (c) – there is slight evidence of a wider cult in the Levant – or was associated with the Nabataean royal house (b).

(iii) Allāt and al-ᶜUzzā, like Manāt, have strong Ḥijāzi connections, but their cult is attested throughout Nabataea. They were widely known in various forms in the Levant and probably belong to (a).

CHAPTER THREE

SACRED PLACES

Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide a summary account of the principal religious monuments at the main Nabataean sites and to classify and interpret them. As has been noted in the Foreword, the present author relies on the work of archaeologists for the basic information and in this context frequent reference is made to Robert Wenning's gazetteer of Nabataean sites (1987) and to Starcky's article in the supplement to the *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (1966). Particularly useful in relation to temples are Tholbecq (1997) and Nehmé (1997), while for illustrations McKenzie (1990), Weber and Wenning (1997) and Freyberger (1998) are excellent. The main sites discussed will be found on Map 1 a the end of this volume.

Although archaeologists have identified a number of Nabataean religious sites, the secure results of their study for the understanding of Nabataean religion must be admitted to be meagre. Even when the archaeology (sequencing, dating, architecture, etc.) are well understood, the lack of written materials, whether inscriptions at the sites in question or literary accounts of the cults, makes it very difficult to be sure how the cult-sites were used. In some cases there are enough inscriptions for us to have a fair idea of which deity or deities were worshipped. Other inscriptions refer to cult personnel and the terminology of some cultic installations. But we have no coherent account of Nabataean religious practice of the kind that we know in, for example, the Jerusalem temple (not that the difficulties with the Jewish sources for this are to be underestimated) or even the temple of Atargatis at Hierapolis. The best we can do is draw up a typology of Nabataean temples (see Augé 1999; Tholbecq 1997), though first we survey the main temple and cult sites. Details of religious inscriptions related to particular sites are mostly dealt with in Chapters IV and V and this minimizes repetition.

Religious Installations at Nabataean Sites

Important Nabataean temples of the central Nabataean territories are known at Petra, Wādī Ramm, Khirbet et-Tannūr and Khirbet edh-Dharīḥ, though it is clear from inscriptional evidence that there must have been many more temples, and other temple buildings in the Ḥawrān (Sīᶜ, Ṣalkhad) and in Egypt (Qaṣrāwet) must also be taken into account. Inscriptions also tell us of temples which have not been found or excavated (e.g. at Ḥegra).

Petra

There is so much material of relevance to religion at Petra itself that a whole book could easily be devoted to it. Brünnow and Domaszewski (1904-05) remains fundamental. More recent archaeological surveys in different European languages are provided by Starcky (1966), Hammond (1973), Negev (1978), Browning (1982²), Wenning (1987, 197-304), Parr (1990) and McKenzie (1990). A brief review of more recent work at Petra may be found in Hammond (1997) and Joukowsky (1997). Here we will restrict our remarks to the most important remains: (i) the temples in the centre of the city; (ii) the evidence of processional ways; (iii) the "high-places"; (iv) locations of specialist cults and (v) the tombs around the centre of the city. Before commencing on this list it is worth recalling that Petra continued to flourish long after the merging of the Nabataean kingdom into the Roman Province of Arabia in A.D. 106 and many of the buildings of the city continued in use into the Roman and even Byzantine periods. It is often not easy to be sure what form a particular monument had in the Nabataean period.

(i) Temples

There are several excavated buildings in the centre of Petra which have been identified as temples, the most important of which appears to have been the Qaṣr el-Bint (Map 2; Plates I-II). This square building lies in the corner of an elongated *temenos* which is entered through a triple monumental gateway of pink sandstone at the end of Petra's main street beside the wadi bed. It may have been the geographical setting alongside the wadi, with the temple hemmed in, which determined the strange layout. The surviving gateway is probably of late

Nabataean or even post-Nabataean date, but it was undoubtedly preceded by an earlier structure.

The public street becomes a processional route through an elongated piazza, c. 200 m in length, alongside the *temenos* wall, with the wadi on the right. Along the wall were situated stone benches, portrait statues of Nabataean kings and doorways leading into other buildings. An inscription found in 1964 set in the benching bears a dedication to Aretas IV from a cult official (*ptwrʾ*) (Parr 1967-68; Starcky and Strugnell 1966, 236-44: I). This is an important inscription since it suggests that the main part of the Qaṣr el-Bint complex (to which the *temenos* wall is certainly related), already existed in the early 1st century A.D. (McKenzie 1990, 34), though it could be quite a lot earlier and *CIS* II, 349, dated c. 65 B.C. and now lost (Milik 1980a, 14), may come from the same place. Aretas IV may be being referred to in an unusual blessing inscription (Zayadine and Farajat 1991, 292-93). A further inscription from within the *temenos* comes from just outside the Qaṣr itself: it appears to refer to Malichus II (A.D. 39/40-69/70), but it is not securely located stratigraphically (Zayadine 1981a, 354-55, pl. cii, 2; Starcky and Strugnell 1966, 244-47: II). Greek and Latin inscriptions from the same area, one a dedication to a governor of the Arabian Province, have been mostly assigned to post-Nabataean dates (Starcky and Bennett 1967-68). Overall, the life of the temple has been assigned to the period from the late first century B.C. to well into the Roman period (Niehr 1998, 223).

The piazza broadens out in front of the temple building into a square space at least partly surrounded originally by porticoes forming what must have been a public viewing area (θέατρον), at the centre of which, directly in front of the temple building, still stands the remains of an outdoor altar or altar-base with steps on the side facing the temple (Map 2; Plates Ib and IIb). We can imagine this in use for rituals which could not be accommodated in the temple itself. It is probable that the central shrine of the temple, the *cella*, with its cult image or images, could be seen from outside and the outdoor altar is aligned with it. The entrance to the temple looks towards the mountains north of the city and this may have some religious significance (Parr 1967-68, 18-19).

The temple itself, sitting on a raised platform, is relatively well preserved, though, as we will see, epigraphic remains are sparse (see Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904-05, I, no. 403 [307-12]; Wright 1961; Tholbecq 1997, 1081; Freyberger 1998, 6-18; illustrations in

Freyberger and Joukowsky 1997, 74-76, figs 75-76). Some external decoration has survived, sufficient to suggest an impressively decorated building of dressed ashlars with stucco medallion panels. It was in an elevated position at the top of two flights of steps. Some of the marble of the steps has survived, as have signs of interior stucco. The temple is square (32 m x 32 m) and its design is tripartite, the front section formed by a portico of four free-standing pillars with wings projecting from the side walls (*in antis*) (see Plate XIV). The middle section, the *cella*, runs the width of the building and is entered through an arched central doorway. The third section is more complicated. It is divided into three cells, the outer ones fronted by walls supporting a mezzanine balcony, with doorways in them. They probably had practical functions related to the cult, though there is the possibility that one of them, the one on the left, was used as a *triclinium*. Each of these rooms gives access to stairs leading to the mezzanine or attic of the temple. The roof was probably at least partly flat, the terrace area also having some cultic use (see Wright 1985).

Of the three cells at the back of the temple, the central one, which is open-fronted, was the one in which the statue or other symbol of the deity was located (Will 1986, 343-44). Nothing remains in place except a raised *podium* 1.4 m high filling the whole cell and approached by steps, but note may be made of a marble statue fragment which comes from a larger than life-sized figure which may have stood in the central *adyton* and a broken eye-idol (Zayadine and Farajat 1991, 293-95). There is also evidence of gold leaf decoration, which Zayadine connects with the report in the *Suda* which tells us that Dushara's throne was covered in gold. The back wall has engaged columns.

The identification of the deity of the temple is largely a matter of supposition. It is an easy assumption that the deity was Dushara, since all the evidence is that Dushara was the main deity of the Nabataeans, but the only epigraphic evidence, probably from the post-Nabataean period, is an inscription fragment which refers to Zeus Hypsistos (Zayadine 1985, 245; 1986a, 247). Note may be made also of a Greek inscription on an altar which probably comes from inside the *temenos* dedicated to Ζεὺς ‘Άγιος-Dushara, which may be of Nabataean date (Parr 1957, 13-14, pl. xv, B; Zayadine 1981a, 352). There is another inscription of this type from the Umm el-Biyārah excavations, again referring to Ζεὺς ‘Άγιος-Dushara (Zayadine 1989, 116; Wenning 1987, 257). This evidence might point most immediately to the notion that the god of the temple was a heavenly god like Baalshamin (Zayadine forthcoming), but this does not settle the question. Firstly, because this is a Roman-period inscription and the temple might have been converted into a Zeus temple without much regard for its original character. Secondly, we know from evidence elsewhere that Dushara was treated as a manifestation of Zeus in the Roman context. And thirdly, perhaps most importantly, the fact that the temple was focused on a deity like Baalshamin does not mean that it was unconnected with Dushara, since the two were clearly assimilated in the mind of some Nabataeans. Wenning and Merklein (1997, 107) see the Qaṣr el-Bint as a temple of a god of heaven of the Helios type in view of sculptural remains (118, pl. 130a).

A broken eye-idol from the *adyton* of the temple led Zayadine and Farajat (1991, 293-95) to al-Kutbā or Atargatis. There are also possible Aphrodite figures from the *temenos* (Zayadine 1981b, 117) and more importantly a fragmentary Roman-period Greek inscription which may, if correctly restored, refer to Aphrodite (Zayadine and Farajat 1991, 293-94, fig. 14). It might then be necessary to conclude that the Qaṣr is the temple of Aphrodite referred to in the Babatha correspondence. Zayadine and Farajat conclude that Dushara and al-ᶜUzzā/Aphrodite were worshipped in the Qaṣr el-Bint (1991a, 295; Zayadine 1986a, 247; so also in effect Wenning and Merklein 1997, 108). For Zayadine the modern title of the temple, Qaṣr el-Bint, "the girl's castle", alludes to the association with Aphrodite/al-ᶜUzzā (forthcoming).

The other major temple which has been excavated at Petra since 1973 is the "Temple of the Winged Lions" (so-called because of some surviving sculpture: Hammond 1975, 150, pl. vi; in general see also Hammond 1996: comparison with other temples 85-99; Tholbecq 1997, 1075-76; Freyberger 1998, 18-21). Located on the north side of the wadi and connected to the main street immediately outside the *temenos* gate by means of a bridge (originally plastered and painted) over the wadi, this was a much more elaborate building than the Qaṣr el-Bint (Map 2; Plate III). A complex of terraced colonnades led the 85 m from the street and bridge to the main part of the temple, which was fronted by an arched portico *in antis*. The square *cella* (c. 17.5 m x 17.5 m) is laid with a decorative marble floor and has engaged and free-standing columns (also decorated) forming an ambulatory (not big enough to allow cultic circumambulation according to Hammond 1996, 113-14) around a central altar *podium* c. 1.3 m high, also surrounded by columns, and accessed by means of two sets of steps. There is evidence that the *podium* and whatever stood on it were curtained (Hammond 1982, 233; 1996, 112-13), an important detail for our purpose, since it implies that the cult-object could be veiled from view. Between the engaged columns were niches for votive items, some of which have been recovered, including an imported Egyptian statuette of a votive figure bearing an Osiris and a now famous inscribed Nabataean sandstone idol representing a goddess with Egyptianizing decoration (Hammond 1981) (Plate IVa).

The date of the temple is indicated by a Nabataean inscription concerning offerings to the priests of the temple from an associated workshop which was written in A.D. 26/7 (Hammond, Johnson and Jones 1986) and another containing reference to Aretas IV from the nearby church may originate in the same temple (Schick et al. 1993, 61). It was destroyed finally by the earthquake of A.D. 363 (Niehr 1998, 224).

Despite the uncertainties, Hammond's synthesis (1996, especially 111-16) on the way the temple may have been used is highly suggestive. He notes, for example, the pieces of evidence which allow parallels to be drawn with the initiation into the Isis cult described in Apuleius' *Golden Ass* (*Metamorphoses*) IX. The *cella* is very small and there was no provision for ritual with a large congregation. There may have been incubation rites involving female priests and a fresco fragment may be interpreted to represent an initiation ceremony of a mystery-cult (179, pl. 31.1). The altar platform was probably veiled — again there are parallels in Apuleius. The absence of a cult-image in the archaeological level sealed by the earthquake of A.D. 363 — note that the cult persisted well into the Christian era — *might* suggest that a priestess or even the queen stood in as a substitute for the goddess (though other possible explanations are not ruled out). The unveiling of the image or representative of the deity would have been a dramatic element in an incense-filled *cella*: there is slight evidence for the use of incense which is in any case probable since it was used so widely and the Nabataeans had ready access to it.

Hammond thus presents a picture of a mystery-cult. He emphasizes Isiac connections, including evidence of statuary and terracottas, but his view is that it was not Isis who was worshipped in the temple but Allāt with Isiac characteristics (101-11; see also Hammond 1990). She took on the role of the supreme goddess, absorbing features of other supreme goddesses and also the characteristics of her "sister", al-ᶜUzzā (who became another daughter of Allāh).

It remains uncertain, however, which deity the temple was dedicated to. Both al-ᶜUzzā/Atargatis and Allāt have been suggested. Hammond had earlier opted for Atargatis (Hammond 1978, 86; 1981, 140), while Niehr (1998, 224) combines the two. The essence of Hammond's later argument for Allāt is that Allāt is the best candidate for the role of supreme goddess in receipt of Isiac motifs including the link with Osiris. These Isis-Osiris connections are clear in the iconographic record of this temple. On the other hand Atargatis is never treated as a Nabataean goddess; Manāt is out of the question; al-ᶜUzzā remains attached to an Arabian milieu. This leaves Allāt as the only plausible candidate in Hammond's view.

The major difficulty with treating Allāt as the main goddess of Petra is the fact that she is named in no Petran inscription, whereas al-ᶜUzzā appears several times (Zayadine in an end-note to Hammond 1990). In fact it cannot even be regarded as certain that a goddess is the dedicatee: the only real evidence is the "eye-idol" depicting a goddess referred to above combined with the suspicion that the temple is the one referred to as dedicated to Aphrodite in the post-Nabataean period (Lewis 1989, no. 12:2, 5-6), though this would more likely point to al-ᶜUzzā in view of the equation of the latter with the former in a bilingual Greek and Nabataean dedication from Cos (*llᶜzʾ ʾlhtʾ* // θεᾶι Ἀφροδίτῃ: Levi della Vida 1938, with Rosenthal 1939, 91 n.4).

Excavated more recently is the so-called "Great Temple" or "Large Temple" on the south side of the main street of Petra, just outside the Qaṣr el-Bint *temenos* (Joukowsky 1998a, b, c; Freyberger 1998, 21-24; "Large Temple" on Map 2). While to the untrained eye the identification of this palatial building as a temple seems plausible — and the term "Great Temple" has been in use since the 1920s –, the excavations leave some doubt about the nature of the building throughout its life. The building complex includes an enclosure with a monumental *propylaeum*, stairways inside leading up to what has been called an "Upper *Temenos*" with a hexagonally paved forecourt, complex water-systems and corridors around the main room of a monumental central building. This building appears to follow the pattern of a temple with peristyle columns *in antis*. It was originally c. 19 m high and the main ground-plan is c. 28 m x 42 m. The building was stuccoed in white and red plaster. Decorative finds include carved pilasters and elephant-headed volutes.

Joukowsky has identified an early building phase in the mid to late 1st century B.C., with major rebuilding in the mid to late 1st century A.D. (Joukowsky 1997; 1998b, c; note also http://webpub.brown.edu/). In this later phase a theatre was created within the complex (Joukowsky 1998c, 300-05, 317). Although this may seem unusual, the presence of a *tyṭrʾ* (θέατρον) is specifically indicated in an inscription from the Sīʿ temple (*CIS* II, 163) (though the interpretation of the word there is not completely assured: *DNWSI* s.v. and the section on Architectural Terms below). The temple at Sūr in southern Syria had a peristyle *theatron* (Butler 1919, 428-31; Wenning 1987, 27-8). It is not clear whether the theatre was for viewing rituals or for other purposes. It thus remains doubtful whether the building (which continued in use into the Roman and Byzantine periods) was a temple throughout its life, and there is little that can be deduced at this stage about religion.

There are other temples at Petra, but discussion of them is incorporated in other sections below (see, e.g., the Deir).

(ii) Processional Ways

There are a number of identifiable *viae sacrae*. The approach to the *temenos* gate of the Qaṣr el-Bint temple via Petra's main street alongside the wadi which flows through the city must also have functioned as the processional way leading to the entrances to the "Temple of the Winged Lions" and the "Great Temple". Apart from the role this thoroughfare must have had both in secular and religious contexts, it was also dominated at the higher level by the surrounding mountains and specifically the high-places. More visible from the city centre would have been the "royal" tombs on the rock-face of el-Khubthah. These are in part aligned on the main street and would have been constantly visible.

The whole central area is first entered through the narrow defile of the Sīq. The function of the Sīq is not obvious (apart from its hydraulic functions) and there is doubt as to whether it was used as a principal highway, but the series of religious niches and other installations in it and the recently identified procession of camels carved on a rock-face suggest strongly that the Sīq had a function in relation to religious processions of some sort. If not a formal approach to Petra for an annual event, it might have been connected with the cultic relation between Wādī Mūsā (ancient Gaia) and Petra (Knauf 1998, 96). There is evidence of several temples having existed at Gaia, including one of Dushara and one of al-Kutbā (unless they are to be identified). The identification of a Baalshamin temple there is disputed (Tarrier 1990, 197; Wenning and Merklein 1997, 107-08).

There is a clearly marked entrance to the Sīq outside the city in the form of a monumental arch originally spanning the rock (dated A.D. 50+: McKenzie 1990, 37-38). There are over fifty niches carved on the rock-faces in the Sīq, of varying degrees of elaboration (Dalman 1908, 143-56; Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904 I, 195-233; Wenning 1987, 209-10). Some have carved idol-blocks and some have associated inscriptions, some of which are clearly of post-Nabataean date and show the Sīq's continued significance (Zayadine 1999, 50). A Greek inscription on an altar found in the Sīq is dedicated "to the Holy God who listens to prayers" (Zayadine 1981a, 352, pl. c), while another was dedicated in the post-Nabataean period by a panegyriarch (πανηγυριάρχης), "president of festal gatherings" from Derᶜā in Syria (Dalman 1908, 145-47: nos 149 and 154). Another Greek inscription, dated A.D. 257, refers to a priest of Isis (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904, I, 223-24: no. 60, 11).

In this whole series of niches perhaps most noticeable is a free-standing sandstone block c. 2.5 m high with a niche carved into it and two idol-blocks carved in the niche sitting on a pedestal (Plate Va). The one on the left has stylized eyes and nose making it look similar to carved figures known at Ḥegra and Ramm as well as Petra itself (see the Atargatis figure related to *CIS* II, 423 and pl. xlix, and the small idol from the "Temple of the Winged Lions", Hammond 1981; Plates IVa, VIIb, Xb, XV). This was discovered in 1977 when the Sīq was being excavated and part of its pavement was uncovered, and it is discussed in detail by Zayadine, who rejects the identification of the Hammond figure as Atargatis and therefore remained agnostic on the identity of the figure in the Sīq (1979, 194-97). In any case it may be noted that this wider area of the Sīq could have had a cultic function (Zayadine 1999, 50).

A series of camels and their leaders are carved on the left wall of the Sīq as one approaches its culmination in the dramatic tomb or temple called the Khazneh with a façade 25 m wide and 40 m high (Plate Vb). The workmanship owes much to Hellenistic, possibly Alexandrian, influence and it is best dated to the 1st century B.C. (McKenzie 1990, 140-43; Wenning 1987, 210-13), but in the present context what is to be noted is the question of whether it was simply a tomb or may have been connected with the cult. There are no inscriptions to throw light on the problem. Comparison with other tombs and the general structure favour the view that it was a tomb, possibly a royal tomb (so, e.g., Dussaud 1955, 31-34) in view of the elaborations (including a porticoed vestibule with side chambers whose doors are surmounted by circular lights), but there are decorative elements on the exterior, including an Isis-Tyche figure, which have allowed for a more complicated explanation. It has been suggested that this might be the Heroon of Obodas, perhaps constructed by Ḥuldu, descendant of Obodas I and devotee of Isis, in honour of her divinized ancestor (Zayadine 1999, 52). We will, however, discuss in Chapter V the reasons for hesitation about this deified king.

The Khazneh remains most likely a tomb: the carvings on the façade can be read as representing the figures, including the Dioscuroi, who lead the dead person to the Elysian Fields (Zayadine 1999, 52; Starcky 1966, cols. 966-67). The *triclinium* across the Sīq from the Khazneh may well be connected with it (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904, I, 231-32, fig. 261, no. 65). The space in front of the Khazneh marks a transition to an area of the city in which tombs are located, as is clear from the tomb opposite the Khazneh itself (Tomb 64).

There are also formal processional ways linked to some of the so-called high-places on the mountain-tops around the city. Thus the way leading from the Wādī Farasā to the high-place called el-Madhbaḥ passes the "Roman Soldier" tomb-complex, the "Garden Temple", the Lion monument (certainly to be connected with the cultic ascent to the high-place), a rock-cut altar and a very important niche containing a betyl and surmounted by a medallion with a figure in it (which may represent Dushara and/or his spouse [Hammond 1968: see *RES* §1088], but may more likely be a double representation of Dushara, perhaps with Dionysiac iconography [Zayadine 1989, 115]; Plate IVb). The approach culminates in a probable *propylaeum* (Lindner, Knauf: see Wenning 1987, 217) before the high-place itself.

There is a similar monumental approach to the Deir and its associated high-place. Again the formal approach to the site is marked by the presence of niches and inscriptions. In the approach to the Deir are found the Lion *triclinium* (lion decoration representing deities?), a *biclinium*, and the Qaṭṭār ed-Deir cult-site with its niches, inscriptions and *triclinium*. One of the inscriptions may indicate that the associated betyl is that of the goddess of Bosra (Wenning 1987, 262; Starcky 1966, 988-90; Milik 1958, 246-49: no. 7).

(iii) High-places

High-places of sacrificial cult are common in Petra (Starcky 1966, col. 1005). The best-known seem to be the focus of a processional cult and tower over the centre of the city. The implication is of a prominent official cultic performance. Here note may be made again of the Deir and el-Madhbaḥ.

The high-place called el-Madhbaḥ, 200 m above the city on the Zibb ᶜAṭūf ridge, is the best known, though it is little understood (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904-05, I, no. 85a [239-45]; Dalman 1908, 157-83; Dussaud 1955, 37-40; Hammond 1973, 98-99; Wenning 1987, 216-20). The main feature is a rock-cut *podium* (Plate VIa), a probable altar 3 m x 2 m, approached by three steps. In the top of the altar there is carved a hole which may have been a socket for the placing of an image or stele. The altar and other installations are on an east-west axis, the steps leading westwards. The whole thing has been carved out of the top of the mountain and a passage-way has been created around the altar analogous to the circumambulatory arrangements of some Nabataean temples.

To the south of the altar is a circular installation, a basin with a drain which may have been used for sacrificial blood or libations. There is a further reservoir cut in the rock beside it and another much larger reservoir 7 or 8 m to the south, with feeder and drainage channels. If blood sacrifice took place here, as is very likely, the reservoirs may have had a function in relation to purification before and after a ceremony. In front of the altar is a 16 m x 7 m "courtyard" cut out of the rock with a raised platform aligned with the altar. This evidently had some religious function: one can speculate on the preparation of offerings, the dais of a priest, etc.

Nearby are two 6-7 m high obelisks, left behind when the mountain was carved into. Whether these have any religious significance is very doubtful: some have thought they represent deities. They could just as well have been connected with the system of quarrying used for obtaining stone for buildings on the ridge, such as the supposed *propylaeum* noted earlier (Hammond 1973, 99). More significant is the nearby niche with an idol and pillars surmounted by crescent moons (Dalman 1908, 179-80). These are seen by Roche (1995) as evidence of a lunar cult.

The Deir (Plate VIb) is a temple carved out of the rock on top of one of the other mountains of Petra (Brünnow and Domaszewski

1904-05, I, no. 462 [331-37]; Dalman 1908, 262-81; Lindner et al. 1984). Its stunning façade (c. 47 m x 48 m) shows some similarity to certain tombs (particularly the Khazneh), with niches for statues (as in the case of, e.g., the Roman Soldier tomb), and some have thought it might be a royal tomb, but its interior design owes nothing to the tomb tradition. It contains instead an arched *adyton* accessed by two short flights of steps. Recent work uncovered low benches suggesting it might have been used as a *biclinium* rather than a mausoleum (Zayadine and Farajat 1991, 282-84). There was also a colonnade in front of the Deir, an altar to its left and a circular enclosure nearby. The ritual performance could have been observed from a grandstand — we might prefer the term θέατρον — a platform in front of one of the buildings on the plateau. Ball (2000, 300-03, fig. 81) adopts this view and regards the façade as a backdrop to a cultic performance.

(iv) Locations of Special Cults

There are also numerous cult-sites at particular locations in the hills and valleys around the centre of Petra. These are often simply rock-ledges or rock-faces which were chosen, probably for their seclusion, perhaps sometimes for their dramatic location, as the cult-sites for devotees of a particular deity. In some cases these sites can be regarded as places where confraternities or sodalities (*Kultgenossenschaften*) met. Such sodalities are familiar institutions at Palmyra and have medieval and modern parallels especially in Catholic Christianity. In the Christian context such groupings might meet in a particular chapel within a church; in the Nabataean context they chose a suitably private location *al fresco*.

Isis worshippers may have met at a particular site in Wādī es-Siyyagh at Sidd el-Mrēriyyeh (Merklein and Wenning 1998a; Plate VIIa). The cult-site consists of a rock-ledge about 5 m wide with a series of cult-niches, three of which are certainly related and one of which is surrounded by a two-part inscription clearly identifying Isis (Milik and Starcky 1975, 120-4, pl. 45; see also Teixidor 1986, 408; corrected reading of Merklein and Wenning 1998a, 167-68). The figure in one of the niches is damaged but clearly interpretable iconographically as an Isis figure. Isis represents and is represented by a throne and it is not surprising to find the throne rather prominent. There may be another Isis sanctuary in Wādī Abū ʿOllēqah (Wenning 1987, 255; Parr 1962; Lindner 1970b, 287-88). Lindner (1970b) suggested that the site was connected with a kind of pilgrim way from central Petra to Jebel Harun and he identified evidence of there having been a small temple or peristyle at the site.

Atargatis too may have had a sanctuary in Wādī es-Siyyagh, where, under a cult-niche containing a betyl with star-like eyes and nose, appears the word *ʾtrʿtʾ*, apparently "Atargatis" (*CIS* II, 423; Wenning 1987, 260; Lindner and Zangenberg 1993; Plate VIIb). Confirming the reference to Atargatis is the appearance twice on the same rock-face, though perhaps not as part of the same inscription, of the word *mnbgytʾ*, "Manbigitess" (*CIS* II, 422; see Zayadine 1991a, 285-86), which here must refer to Hierapolis/Membīj, the centre of Atargatis worship.

In this series of "hidden" cult-sites we might also include the Qaṭṭār ed-Deir on the way up to the Deir (Dalman 1908, 252-55), but perhaps the most noteworthy instance is the cult of ʿObodat, also attested near the Deir, where the reference is to a *marzēḥā* devoted to the god (*RES* §1423; Dalman 1912, 92-94: no. 73; Wenning 1997, 181-82). The best known location of this cult remains, however, the ʿObodat chapel at en-Nmēr (Dalman 1908, 212-14; Wenning 1987, 253-54; 1997, 183-90), where a statue in a cult-room was dedicated to him (*CIS* II, 354; Milik 1959, 555-60). It might be related to the el-Madhbaḥ high-place. The issue of whether this cult involves a deified king is a separate one: the divine ʿObodat was clearly the object of worship whether he was originally a king or not.

(v) Tombs

Finally there are the tombs, which must be regarded, like the tombs at Ḥegra, as having religious significance, though they are also significant in relation to the royal family and the pretensions of élites.

There is no point in trying to review here all the tombs of Petra (619 façades: Wenning 1996, 255). Suffice to note that burial practices must be regarded as reflecting to some extent beliefs about afterlife, i.e. religious beliefs. The Nabataeans who could afford it clearly believed that their long-term comfort could in some sense be assured by the building of a prestigious tomb. The main tombs overlooking the city of Petra, the Urn Tomb, Corinthian Tomb, etc. were almost certainly royal tombs. From the small amount of evidence which comes from controlled excavations of tombs there is also good evidence of grave goods having been included in burials (so in tomb 813:

Zayadine 1985, 229-37; see Plate IXb). Sadly it is to be expected that most such grave goods will have been removed long ago.

The two main sources of information on tombs, Petra and Ḥegra, form an interesting contrast. At Ḥegra, as we will see, there is virtually no information to be found on the buildings associated with tombs but a very large number of inscriptions, while at Petra there are several tombs with associated installations surviving but hardly any with inscriptions. The Petra tombs which have associated buildings probably connected with the funerary cult include the Urn Tomb, the ʿUneishu Tomb and the Roman Soldier tomb. In the Urn Tomb again there are surrounding colonnades and subterranean vaults (perhaps secondary). The tomb-chamber may itself have originally been a *triclinium*, with the burials high above the doorway in *loculi* on the façade (Parr 1968). In the tomb of ʿUneishu, a royal minister (Zayadine 1974, 142-50), we again have a colonnade on each side and in the left-hand corner a *triclinium* which must have been connected with some ritual for the dead. From this tomb comes *CIS* II, 351 (earlier misassigned) and several other inscription fragments, on a stone grave-slab and on plaster (Zayadine 1974, 142-50, pl. lxvi). A similar situation is found in the case of the Roman Soldier tomb (Nabataean despite its name): a colonnaded portico and a highly decorated *triclinium* opposite the tomb itself.

The *triclinium* is a notable feature of Petran architecture (see Tarrier 1980; 1995). Over 100 such installations are known, some with two benches rather than three (*biclinia*), some circular (*stibadia*). About 25 are clearly connected to tombs; many others had non-funerary purposes, but may still have had a religious function in the context of shared cultic meals or the institution known as the *marzēḥā*.

Although Petra is not rich in tomb inscriptions, one of the few surviving, that on the Turkmāniyyeh tomb, is particularly interesting from the point of view of tomb architecture and associated installations, *CIS* II 350 (Milik 1959, 555-60; Healey 1993, 238-42):

> *qbrʾ dnh wṣryḥʾ rbʾ dy bh wṣryḥʾ zʿyrʾ dy gwʾ mnh dy bh bty mqbryn ʿbydt gwḥyn wkrkʾ dy qdmyhm wʿrkwtʾ wbtyʾ dy bh wgnyʾ wgnt smkʾ wbʾrwt myʾ wṣhwtʾ wṭwryʾ*
>
> *wšʾryt kl ʾṣlʾ dy bʾtryʾ ʾlh ḥrm wḥrg dwšrʾ ʾlh mrʾnʾ wmwtbh ḥryšʾ wʾlhyʾ klhm bšṭry ḥrmyn kdy bhm ppqdwn dwšrʾ wmwtbh wʾlhyʾ klhm dy kdy bšṭry ḥrmyʾ ʾnw ytʿbd wlʾ ytšnʾ*
>
> *wlʾ ytpṣṣ mn kl dy bhm mndʿm wlʾ ytqbr bqbrʾ dnh ʾnwš klh lhn mn dy ktyb lh tnʾ mqbr bšṭry ḥrmyʾ ʾnw ʿd ʿlm*

> This tomb and the large burial-chamber within it and the small burial-chamber beyond it, in which are burial-places, niche-arrangements, and the enclosure in front of them and the porticoes and rooms within it [i.e. the enclosure] and the benches (gardens?) and *triclinium*(-garden?) and the wells of water and the cisterns(?) and walls(?) and all the rest of the property which is in these places are sacred and dedicated to Dushara, the god of our lord, and his sacred throne and all the gods, (as) in the documents of consecration according to their contents. And it is the responsibility of Dushara and his throne and all the gods that it should be done as in these documents of consecration and nothing of all that is in them shall be changed or removed and none shall be buried in this tomb except whoever has written for him an authorization for burial in these documents of consecration for ever.

There is no date, though it has been assigned on palaeographic grounds to c. A.D. 50 (Starcky 1966, col. 931). No person is named as owner. The lack of a name and other details implies that the details were preserved elsewhere in an archive (Lidzbarski 1898, 145). The most interesting and valuable feature of the inscription is the detail it gives (or would give if we were sure of the meanings of all the words) of the arrangements and installations surrounding the tomb.

The other important tomb inscription from Petra is the Bāb es-Sīq Nabataean-Greek bilingual (Milik 1976; Milik 1980a, 12-13):

> ᶜAbdmanku son of Akayus son of Shullay son of ᶜUtayhu ..... built this burial-monument (for himself) and his descendants and their descendants for ever and ever (in the year ....) of Maliku, during his lifetime.
> Abdomanchos son of (Ach)aios made this (funeral) monument for (himself) and for his (chi)ldren.

In view of the paucity of tomb inscriptions at Petra Gawlikowski (1975-76) has suggested there might have been a taboo against inscriptions at Petra. This seems unlikely. More likely is it that inscriptions of some less durable kind were attached to Petran façades.

So far as inscriptional evidence not directly related to a known cult-site is concerned there are rare direct references to temples, some of which will be examined in the next chapter. Thus the title "Lord of the Temple", probably referring to Dushara, may be presumed to allude to the Qaṣr el-Bint. We have also noted the later reference in the Babatha archive to the temple of Aphrodite at Petra and this may be the successor to the Nabataean-period Temple of the Winged Lions.

Ḥegra and Ruwāfah

The most important Nabataean site outside Petra, ancient Ḥegra (later named Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ) in north-west Saudi Arabia, has not been subjected to systematic excavation. Though some limited work has been done in recent years (al-Talhi et al. 1988), we rely mainly on the descriptions of Jaussen and Savignac (1909; 1914) and Healey (1993).

The site is dominated by the monumental tombs, about eighty in number and mostly located in groups on sandstone rock outcrops (see Plates VIII and IXa). Thirty-six tombs bear inscriptions and only three are undated. All but one of the twenty-eight clear dates on tombs fall between 1 B.C./A.D. and A.D. 74/75. The style of the tombs is similar to that found at Petra, but vases are commonly carved over doorways. Human figures never appear, as they do occasionally at Petra, but there are frequently eagles, serpents, sphinxes, griffins and other semi-mythological and demonic creatures (often just faces [see Plate VIIIb]), as well as rosettes, solar discs, etc. The eagles over doorways, a feature rare at Petra, probably represent the sun or the god Dushara as god of heaven (Wenning 1996, 257) and protector of the tomb's inviolability. We can assume the same role for the demonic figures. There are dated tombs of all styles, so the different types do no follow any chronological order. Rather, the different types reflect the social background of the owners (Negev 1976a).

The insides of the tombs can be very complicated. Tomb A 3, for example, contains fifty-three places for burials (JS I, 359) (compare Plate IXb of Tomb 813 at Petra). Some of these may have been added in the post-Nabataean period, while the smaller ones could have been meant for collecting together the bones in secondary burial (Negev 1986, 71-83). Inscriptions refer to the dividing up of tombs between members of the family: some niches inside a tomb might be quite large, while others would only just accommodate one burial. Tomb-slabs covered individual burials: some inscribed fragments have been found which suggest they may have had names on them. Occasionally there is an inscription inside the tomb on the wall beside or above a niche in addition to the inscription outside on the façade.

The façade inscriptions are of major significance. It may be that the exterior inscription was in some cases on a plaque inserted into the frame on the façade. The façades may have been partly painted, plastered or otherwise adorned.

We know from Petra that tombs could have other installations attached to them: *triclinia*, gardens, etc. (Turkmāniyyeh Tomb, Urn Tomb and the ᶜUneishu tomb). This is less clear at Ḥegra, though the ledge outside one tomb (A 3) may be being referred to when the related inscription speaks of the "enclosure" associated with the tomb.

To the north-east of the site stands an isolated rock outcrop called the Jabal Ithlib, a line of precipitous summits surrounding a central hollow approached through a narrow gorge (Healey 1993, map iii; pl. vii). Wenning (1996, 260-66) interprets the Jabal Ithlib as a centre of various *marzēḥā*-type cults, this being the only suitable area of the site. At the entrance to the gorge is the so-called Dīwān (JS I, 405-09; Healey 1993, pl. x; Plate Xa). This is a large *triclinium* (10 m wide, 12 m deep), with an open front and pilasters at each corner, the only *triclinium* recognized at Ḥegra. The openness of the design may imply participation by a large congregation of people. The religious significance of the place is suggested by a small cult figure high on the rock-face to the right of the Dīwān, usually compared with a relief of Allāt at ᶜAyn esh-Shallāleh (both associated with lunar cult by Roche 1995; also Wenning 1996, 261) and there are also many inscriptions nearby, some explicitly religious. An inscription opposite the Dīwān beside a cult-niche is dedicated to the god Shayᶜ-al-Qawm.

Cult-niches are very prominent in the Jabal Ithlib area, both on the inside and on the rock-faces which surround it. They frequently contain small stone pillars in relief representing a god, alone or with associated deities. An important inscription surmounts a niche in the gorge leading to the central area, dedicated to Aᶜra, the god of Bosra.

Inside the Jabal Ithlib, the open space must have been used for religious rites; Jaussen and Savignac (JS I, 126) call it a natural *ḥaram*: the cult-niches surrounding it reflect this. An inscription to the left of the central area apparently refers to a banqueting ritual (*mškbʾ*) (JS I, 206: no. 40), while nearby, to the right, and also on the opposite side of the central space, there are rooms like the Dīwān cut from the rock.

Further along the central area, there are on the left niches and a possible altar, apparently originally accompanied by an inscription, of which only the frame remains. Wenning (1996, 259-60) notes that this has high-place features, with a *mōtᵉbā* and *ṭawāf* (circumambulation) arrangements. On the opposite side, there are steps leading ultimately via a narrow gully and past more niches (with basins), to a smaller plateau with a very prominent stone pillar with stylized eyes and nose carved on the rock-face (Plate Xb). This is surrounded by graffiti and may have been the focus of a significant part of the cult of the Jabal Ithlib complex. Parallels at Petra and Ramm suggest the pillar represents the goddess al-ᶜUzzā, though caution is needed (Wenning 1996, 264). Beyond this point, on an inaccessible ledge facing into the centre of the city, is a long inscription which refers to a deity called "Lord of the Temple", probably Dushara. The inscription marks the meeting place of a group of his devotees (JS I, 213-16: Nab. no. 57).

A major gully almost in the centre of the mountain range leads up to a water-source. The rock-faces here are covered in Nabataean graffiti. No doubt the water was used for purposes of ritual purification.

Just outside the Jabal Ithlib is a small free-standing rock, called "the Sanctuary" by Jaussen and Savignac (JS I, 432; II, 103-4, fig. 45, plate lvi, 1). This has been hollowed out to form an open-fronted room facing the Jabal Ithlib (Healey 1993, pl. viii). Inside are niches and some minor inscriptions. One of these may refer to a statue in one of the niches (JS I, 239: no. 159). The roof of the rock is accessible and the installations carved on the flat roof clearly suggest that the Sanctuary was indeed a holy place and had some importance. Wenning (1996, 267) refers to Strabo's reference to roof rituals. It commands a magnificent view of the Jabal Ithlib on the one hand and the tombs and city centre on the other.

The town itself is the least-known part of Ḥegra. Surface exploration (for example, near Tombs E) has produced Nabataean potsherds of 1st century B.C./A.D. date and other minor finds, including a fine Nabataean sundial, possibly owned by a Jewish inhabitant of the town (Healey 1993, pl. ix; 1989) and now in the Istanbul Ancient Orient Museum. Surface finds of stone pillars suggest substantial buildings existed (JS II, 105, fig. 46, pl. lvi, 2). That these included temples is clear from inscriptions. One temple (*bytʾ*), that of Q̰aysha, is mentioned in a tomb text (H 36:9) and another, probably of Dushara, in his title "Lord of the House" (JS I, 213-16: Nab. no. 57). The temple referred to in the latter could be a specific one in Ḥegra, but this might simply be a generally used title of Dushara (since it is used elsewhere too).

There is one other site within Saudi Arabia which has produced material significant for our present purpose, Ruwāfah 220 km northwest of Ḥegra, though it is post-Nabataean (Parr et al. 1968/69, 215-19; Wenning 1987, 110-11). The interest here is in a temple building similar to that in Wādī Ramm (below) and an important inscription which dates it (Milik in Parr et al. 1971, 55-56). The temple is squarish (c.13 m x 11 m). It had a courtyard and a tripartite rear chamber, two side-rooms and a central *adyton* (4 m x 2 m). It was probably stuccoed on the inside, and had diagonal tooling on the external stones. The inscription, a bilingual in Greek and Nabataean, is on a lintel, originally belonging to the main entrance and indicating dedication to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. It dates the foundation of the temple to A.D. 166-69. There are other short inscriptions, Greek and Nabataean, one of which mentions a temple built by a priest (*ʾfkl*) of the "the god" or Ilāhā (*ʾlhʾ*) (Milik in Parr et al. 1971, 57-58). This too is of post-Nabataean date, but an earlier temple at the site remains a possibility.

Wādī Ramm

Wādī Ramm (Starcky 1966, 978-80; Wenning 1987, 101-05), a major wadi system in southern Jordan c. 40 km east of Aqaba, is partly hedged in by mountainous cliffs rather similar to those of the Wādī Ḥaḍramawt in Yemen. Wādī Ramm contains a variety of minor Nabataean remains (see Savignac 1932, 590-97; e.g. at Umm el-Quṣēr; maps and sketches of the area in Savignac 1934), but for our purposes two particular sites are important, in a location named in the inscriptions as *ʾrm* and associated with Allāt, which is likely to be the Iram mentioned in the Quran:

> Do you not know how your Lord dealt with (the tribe of) ʿĀd, Iram with its columns (peaks?), the like of which has not been created in the (whole) land? (89:5-8; Gibb 1962, 276; Glidden 1939).

The identification is made much more certain by the inscription referring to the foundation of the temple at Ramm by the ʿĀd (below), though it is to be noted that there is no clear traditional identification (al-Hamdānī's *al-Iklīl* viii: 41-43; trans. Faris 1938, 29-30).

Whatever about this identification, it is clear that the site must have been an important station on the Nabataeans' trade routes. The most impressive monumental remains at the site are those of a Nabataean temple at the foot of the Jabal Ramm (Savignac and Horsfield 1935; Kirkbride 1960; Tholbecq 1997, 1076-78; 1998; Freyberger 1998, 41-44). The main room of the temple, almost square (13 m x 11 m), was open to the east, but pillared *in antis*, and probably originally surrounded by a *temenos* (Plates XIIa and XIV). Entrance by means of steps led to a central area or *cella* delimited by a wall with engaged columns surrounding a *podium* (Kirkbride 1960 regarded the walls built between the columns as secondary). The floor was paved with hexagonal stones and the internal walls were rendered in painted stucco and decorative mortar. It was possible to circumambulate the *podium*. Outside the pillars were subsidiary rooms probably connected with the cult and there were probably also cisterns. Stairs led to the roof or upper storey. Tholbecq (1997, 1077-78; 1998) also identified an exterior *podium* attached to the temple which must have had a cultic use.

Items found inside the temple include a betyl, an altar base, a statue fragment, possibly Allāt (Savignac and Horsfield 1935, pl. ix), and an altar with a Latin inscription, the later Roman interest in the site being marked also by the discovery of a coin of Marcus Aurelius. There are also fragments of graffiti from the interior stucco walls, a few in Greek ("Remembered be ..."), but most in cursive Nabataean (Savignac and Horsfield 1935, 265-70, pl. x). The latter refer to "the great goddess who is at Iram" (and another location is probably also mentioned, possibly Bosra [*bṣrʾ*], though the publishers of the inscription thought the word was *qṣrʾ* and referred to the *cella*). The same inscription is dated to the year 41 or 45, but with no surviving specification of the era. Savignac and Horsfield (1935, 268) preferred a dating in the provincial era, giving A.D. 147 and assigning the building of the temple to the late 1st century A.D., but this has been reassigned to a date a century earlier (below).

There is some disagreement about the history of this building, but it is clear that it went through several phases of rebuilding, as we know from surviving inscriptions. A Thamudic inscription on a reused stone found in the central *cella* in 1997 and containing a dedication to the goddess Lat (= Allāt) confirms the Quranic association of Iram with the tribe of ʿĀd (*ʾl ʿd*) and implies that the Nabataeans took it over and rebuilt it. While it remains difficult to date the earlier structure, the inscription on plaster referred to above may now plausibly be redated to the reign of Aretas IV, i.e. to A.D. 32 or 36 (Zayadine and Farès-Drappeau 1998, 257: A.D. 32). This suggests that the Nabataean rebuild took place very early in the 1st century A.D. An inscription from nearby ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh, in the "for the life of ..." category, is dated to the reign of Rabel II (A.D. 70/71-106) (Savignac 1933, 407-11: no. 1).

Discovered a little earlier, in 1931, was a shrine of the goddess

Allāt centred on a spring called ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh to the south (Savignac 1932; maps and sketches of site in Savignac 1934: Plate XI). It is located in a vegetation-covered cleft in the cliffs of the wadi down which perpetual streams of water flow, forming a pool. There were in antiquity buildings, a walled pool and a hydraulic system, fragments of which survive, to carry water to a nearby reservoir and possibly to the Allāt temple described above. The cleft and overhang of rock form a natural sanctuary and the religious character of the place is confirmed by a series of inscriptions on the overhang and in the immediate vicinity. These indicate that the goddess Allāt was venerated at the spot, along with other deities.

The most important inscriptions at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh should be noted briefly: they will be discussed further in the sections on Allāt, al-ʿUzzā, etc.

An inscription beside a niche (Savignac 1934, 584: fig. 7, pl. xxxix; 1933, 411-12: no. 2) refers to *ʾlt ʾlhtʾ d(y) bbṣrʾ*, “Allāt the goddess who is in Bosra ...”. She is here represented by an elaborate niche, crescent and stele with a stylized head. The same inscription refers to the dedicators of the image as *ʿlymy ʾpkl*, “servants of the *afkalʾ*”, officials of some sort. Beside this, to the left, are two carved betyls with stylized stellar eyes and nose similar to forms found elsewhere (Savignac 1934, 574-75: no.17; 586-87; see Plate XV upper). Beneath the two betyls is an inscription which names the one on the left as al-ʿUzzā and the one on the right as *ʾlktbʾ dy bgyʾ*. Another inscription refers to Dushara and Baalshamin (Savignac 1934, 576-77: no. 19). A little to the east are found another pair of betyls dedicated by artisans to al-ʿUzzā and the “Lord of the Temple” (Savignac 1933, 413-15: no. 4; 1934, 587-89, fig. 11; Plate XV lower left). Finally and importantly, a badly damaged inscription (Savignac 1933, 407-11 no. 1) on a separate architectural block of stone gives the year 17 (Starcky 1966, col. 979) of Rabel II and mentions members of the royal family, including a second wife. It may refer to the dedication of a statue, but could indicate an approximate foundation date for the ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh sanctuary in Rabel’s reign (A.D. 70/71-106), though nothing excludes an earlier foundation, and the nearby temple was probably earlier in date.

In fact both the Iram temple studied by Savignac and Horsfield (1934) and the other installations at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh appear to have been dedicated to Allāt: she is called “the great goddess who is in Iram” (*ʾlhtʾ rbtʾ dy bʾrm*) (Savignac and Horsfield 1935, 265-8: no.

1:2). She was “the Goddess” *par excellence* (so in one of the Greek texts: Savignac 1933: no. 2). Numerous inscriptions from the site and the nearby Umm el-Quṣēr refer to her, mostly inscriptions of the “Remembered be ...” type (Healey 1996, especially 178-81). The following is from ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh:

> *dkrt ʾlt ʿydw*
> *bnyʾ br ʾbšlm bṭb*
>
> May Allāt remember ʿAydu the builder, son of Abshalam, for good (Savignac 1933, 417: no. 7),

while

> *dkyr ḥyn br ʿbdʾlhy br*
> *ʾbnʿtmw qdm ʾltw*
> *ʾlhtʾ dy bʾrm ʿd ʿl(m)*
>
> Remembered be Ḥayyan son of .... son of ... before Allatu the goddess who is in Iram, for ever (Savignac 1932, 593-4: no. 3),

comes from Umm el-Quṣēr.

In one of the inscriptions the priest of Allāt (*khn ʾltw ʾlhtʾ*) is mentioned (Savignac 1932, 591-93: no. 2). *khnʾ* also appears in Savignac 1934 no. 23. Savignac suggests that the use of this term, frequent in Sinai, reflects an Arab background: it may be contrasted with the use of the term *kmrʾ* (see *CIS* II, 170 mentioned above).

Khirbet et-Tannūr and Khirbet edh-Dharīḥ

In this survey, only sites with significant archaeological or epigraphic remains relating to religion can be discussed and this reduces the number of relevant sites significantly. It is salutary to note, however, that two apparently minor sites to the north of Petra, Tannūr excavated by Glueck in 1937 (Glueck 1965 [reviewed critically by Starcky 1968]; 1970, 215-43; Wenning 1987, 76-81; Negev 1978; Tholbecq 1997, 1079-80; Roche 1997; Freyberger 1998, 34-41) and Dharīḥ excavated since 1984, have turned out to be of major significance as the result of the detailed archaeological work done there.

Tannūr lies in the Wādī el-Ḥasā approximately at the point where it is joined by the Wādī el-Laʿbān on the top of a 300 m high hill commanding a superb view of the wadi, including a black basalt flow (which may be connected with the selection of the site). The confined summit of the hill is occupied by an important Nabataean temple, about 40 m x 48 m in size, which was, when excavated, in an excellent state of preservation, as Glueck's published photographs show (e.g. 1970, 218: fig. 125; 220: fig. 128; see Plates XIIIa and XIV). The structure had an east-facing façade with engaged columns and (originally) Nabataean capitals and a gateway. The doorway with its steps gave access to a paved courtyard (c. 15.6 m x 15.6 m) porticoed on the north and south sides. There was an altar in the courtyard and there are *triclinia* attached north and south. The square inner sanctuary, which faces east, is on a *podium*, with four steps to a doorway flanked by engaged columns with niches on each side and with an elaborate architrave incorporating female heads. Over the doorway was set the large figure of a vegetation deity with foliage and fruit, identified by Glueck as Atargatis. Side panels are also decorated with vine-leaves etc. Glueck claims an eagle figure stood above the vegetation deity: Zeus or Zeus-Hadad or the sun.

Inside the c. 3.5 m square inner sanctuary is a small raised shrine, possibly a *mōtᵉbā*, later rebuilt with access to the top by means of a stairway (Glueck's Phase III, early 2nd century A.D.). On top stood the altar. Underground chambers in the courtyard appear to be receptacles for debris from sacrificial offerings. The structure had decorations including sculptures of dolphin and grain goddesses. In Glueck's Phase II in a niche above the east façade would have stood a relief of a Zeus-Hadad, seated between bulls and holding a thunderbolt (a repeated motif in the temple), which has survived (Glueck 1970, 226: fig. 132), and an "Atargatis" figure, a fragment of which was identified by Glueck. There are a vast number of other sculptured figures representing various aspects of various deities: Aphrodite-al-ᶜUzzā, Helios-Baalshamin, Hermes, Jupiter, etc. as well as an important Tyche encircled with zodiac figures (plate XIIIb). The latter has an unusual arrangement of the zodiac which may reveal an aspect of the calendar (Glueck 1952; 1965, 413-15).

The dating of all of these elements is much in dispute. However, proposed dates mostly focus on the 1st century A.D. (Roche 1997) and specific dating evidence is provided by two inscriptions published by Savignac (1937), though it should be noted that Starcky (1966, col. 930) regarded the script and the general design of the Tannūr temple as rather un-Nabataean. The first inscription (1937, 405-08: no. 1) is of the "for the life of ..." type and was erected by one Natirel, an official of the Dharīḥ sanctuary, in honour of Aretas IV and his wife Ḥuldu in the king’s second regnal year, i.e. 8/7 B.C. It is to be noted here that the *ryš ʿyn lʿbn* mentioned in this inscription is “head of the spring of Laʿban” (compare the modern name of Wādī el-Laʿbān in which Dharīḥ is located), not the name of a deity (so Savignac and Starcky 1957, 215-17, correcting Savignac 1937). The second inscription is also dated to the reign of the same king, Aretas IV, and was evidently made by the same person (Savignac 1937, 409-10: no. 3). A third, on a stone slab, indicates worship of the Edomite deity Q̱ōs (Savignac 1937, 408-09: no. 2; Milik 1958, 237-38):

> *(d)y ʿbd qsmlk*
> *lqs ʾlh*
> *ḥwrwʾ*
>
> (Stele) which Q̱ōsmalik made for Q̱ōs, the god of Ḥūrawā.

Since a fourth inscription from Tannūr has a dedication to *ḥwrwy*, “the Ḥūrawite”, it is most likely that Ḥūrawā is a place-name, possibly the ancient name of Tannūr itself (so Milik 1958, 238) and it appears that Q̱ōs was very prominent at Tannūr. Glueck (1965, 86) thought the deity of Tannūr was Dushara in the form of Zeus-Hadad, but Starcky (1968, 208-10, 225-34), reviewing Glueck’s work, pointed out that only Q̱ōs is represented in the inscriptions and must be the main deity of the temple. No doubt he was associated with a consort of an Atargatis type (Drijvers 1980, 114-16). It would not be correct, however, simply to call her Atargatis, as Glueck did (e.g. 1970, 227). The iconography of the goddess with fish or dolphin decoration may be influenced by Derketo of Askalon (Sourdel 1952, 39-42; Glueck 1965, 382-83; Starcky 1968, 228-30; Teixidor 1977, 96-97; in Lucian, *De Dea Syra* § 14), but there is no need to make a specific link with the sea (Drijvers 1980, 114-16) and it is likely Allāt or al-ʿUzzā was the *paredros*.

Tannūr, unlike most other Nabataean temple sites, is isolated, an isolated “high-place” with no settlement, let alone city, nearby. Despite this it was used over a long period and refurbished several times. It is possible that the prominent *triclinia* in the temple imply that we are dealing with a place of pilgrimage, possibly even a national shrine (Ball 2000, 350) and there is obviously a close connection with Dharīḥ.

Although it was known before Tannür, Dharīḥ has been excavated much more recently (Villeneuve 1984; 1985; 1988; al-Muheisen and

Villeneuve 1994; 1999; Wenning 1987, 81-84; Dentzer-Feydy 1990 [note figs 1-3]; Tholbecq 1997, 1078-79; Freyberger 1998, 31-34). The settlement, 20 km north of Ṭafīleh on a major north-south route, was important from the 1st century B.C. to the 4th A.D.: we have already noted the inscription of Natirel, possibly custodian of the spring of Wādī el-Laᶜbān, dated 8/7 B.C. The temple is well preserved (Plate XIIb). The *temenos* is oriented north-south on an outcrop pointing into the wadi. It has been compared with the temple at Sīᶜ (below). There were two courtyards, the second, containing the temple itself, is paved and was partly provided with porticoes and benches (creating a *theatron*). The temple (23 m x 37 m) is tripartite with a decorated façade (engaged columns) and a wide vestibule leading to a second room with stuccoed and painted walls. At the end of the room is the *podium* of the square *adyton*, accessed originally by two flights of steps. The altar *podium*, which has three holes in it which may have held the cult objects, was surrounded by a colonnade with a circumambulatory arrangement. There were crypts below.

Since 1993 there have been finds of fine sculpture including a Hermes figure (possibly identifiable with al-Kutbā: al-Muheisen and Villeneuve 1999, 58, but see Chapter V), a Castor and Pollux, etc., originally from the temple façade. We do not, however, know the name of the deity connected with the temple. The nearby spring may be significant in the same way that the spring at the Wādī Ramm site is significant (Villeneuve 1985, 423), but Dharīḥ may have been a stopping point on a trade or pilgrim route leading to Tannūr (see Map 1).

Southern Syria (Ḥawrān)

The Ḥawrān region of southern Syria has many religious remains, both epigraphic and archaeological, which have been conventionally designated “Nabataean”. Not all are directly relevant to our theme and many have little to connect them with the Nabataeans apart from the fact that a script similar to (but not always identical with) the Nabataean script was used. They must, therefore, be treated with caution. Only those inscriptions which can be assigned to the Nabataean period and associated with Nabataean rule of the area (e.g. dated according reigns of Nabataean kings) or mention the specifically Nabataean god Dushara can be regarded as definitely relevant.

Note may be made of the surveys of Butler (1904, 1919), Littmann

(1905, 1914), Wenning (1987) and also on particular aspects Dentzer (1985a and 1986a), and Starcky (1985) reviewing Nabataean epigraphy in the area. Both the epigraphy and the archaeology are, however, very difficult to disentangle from the later flourishing Roman culture in the area and there are very few cases where the accumulation of architectural and epigraphic information is such as to merit separate discussion in the present context.

Relevant information on Bosra is sparse (Sartre 1985, especially 49-56; Segal 1988, 49-73). Most of its monuments, including the well-preserved theatre, are from the Roman Provincial period, though probably following a Nabataean layout. The so-called Nabataean arch at the east end of the city may belong to the latter half of the 1st century A.D. (Dentzer 1986c, 71; Ball 2000, 198; Peters, 1983, especially 273-74). It stands at the end of a *via sacra* and may have marked the entrance to the *temenos* of a Nabataean temple, as is suggested by some finds (al-Megdad 1982, 269).

Inscriptions from Bosra and elsewhere clearly point to the existence of major cult-centres in the city. Aʿra, the local god of Bosra, appears in a Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ inscription dated A.D. 39/40 (JS I, 204-06: Nab. no. 39) and in an inscription dated A.D. 93 from Imtan in the Ḥawrān (*RES* § 83) this god is identified with Dushara:

> *dnh msgdʾ dy qrb mnʿt br gdyw ldwšrʾ wʾʿrʾ ʾlh mrʾnʾ dy bbṣrʾ*
>
> This stele Munʿat bar Gadiyu dedicated to Dushara-Aʿra, god of our lord, (god) who is in Bosra.

This appears to locate the dynastic cult in Bosra and Milik (1958, 233-35) suggested that this reflected a move by Rabel II from Petra to Bosra. Wenning (1987, 45) is rightly cautious about this assumption. The same identification with Aʿra is found in a Bosra inscription dated A.D. 148 (*RES* § 676) and at Umm el-Jimāl (Littmann 1914, 34-35: no. 38; 1909, 383-86: no. V).

That there was a temple of Dushara, presumably the Bosran version of Dushara, i.e. Dushara-Aʿra, and the other gods is made explicit in a Bosra inscription which must come from the wall (*peribolos*) of the temple (Littmann 1914, 56-57: no. 69; *RES* § 2025; § 90):

> *dnh gdrʾ dy hw my[*
> *wkwyʾ dy bnh tymw br [*
> *ldwšrʾ wšryt ʾlhyʾ b[ṣryʾ*

> This is the wall which ... and windows which Taymu bar ... built for Dushara and the rest of the gods of Bosra.

The word *šryt* is better understood as a common noun (cf. *šʾryt* in *CIS* II, 350: 3 and JS I, 57:1) rather than as the name of a otherwise unknown deity. It is to be expected that other deities too must have been worshipped in a city like Bosra. We have evidence of Baalshamin (*CIS* II, 176), Allāt (ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh: Savignac 1933, 411-12: no. 2) and al-ʿUzzā (Littmann 1914, 58-59: no. 71 and 57-8: no. 70, though the reading in the latter is uncertain: Starcky 1966, 1003).

Also allowing a combination of archaeological and epigraphic evidence is the Allāt temple at Ṣalkhad c. 20 km east of Bosra (Nabataean spelling: *slḥd*) (Butler 1919, 117-19). An inscription from the town on a basalt lintel, reused in the building of a church, is dated A.D. 95 and refers explicitly to the rebuilding of a temple (*bytʾ*) dedicated to Allāt and her stele (*wgrʾ*) (Milik 1958, 227-31: no. 1 = *CIS* II, 183+184) (discussed further in Chapter IV):

> *dnh bytʾ dy bnh ʿwtʾlh br qṣyw br ʾdynt br ʿwtʾ(lh)*
> *br ʾklbw br rwḥw br qṣyw lʾlt wwgrh ...*
>
> This is the temple which PN (re-)built for Allāt and her betyl (?) ...

The temple being referred to was earlier dedicated in A.D. 56 (*CIS* II, 182):

> *dnh bytʾ dy bnh rwḥw br mlkw br ʾklbw br rwḥw lʾlt ʾlhthm dy bslḥd wdy nṣb rwḥw br qṣyw ʿm rwḥw dnh dy ʿlʾ*
>
> This is the temple which Rawḥu bar Maliku bar Aklabu bar Rawḥu built for Allāt their goddess, who is in Ṣalkhad and which Rawḥu bar Qaṣiyu great-grandfather of this Rawḥu above set up (corrected interpretation of the word *ʿm* by Clermont-Ganneau 1898c, 372-4).

A third inscription is discussed in Chapter IV in relation to Allāt. What is immediately of interest here is the fact that the temple was clearly maintained by a particular family.

Baalshamin may also have been worshipped at Ṣalkhad, but he appears to be a "personal deity" and may not have had a specific temple there (Littmann 1914, 21-22: no. 23).

In passing we may note the southern Ḥawrān site of Umm el-Jimāl in northern Jordan (Butler 1919; Littmann 1914, 34-56: nos. 38-68; de Vries 1998). Rich in later remains, it is now clear that the

Nabataean temple identified by Butler (1919, 155-56) is of much later, 4th century date (S. T. Parker and L. de Veaux in de Vries 1998, 149-60). It had been identified as Nabataean partly because of a nearby bilingual inscription (Littmann 1914, 34-35: no. 38; 1909, 383-86: no. V):

> *msgdʾ dy ʿbd mškw br ʿwydʾ ldwšrʾ*
> Μασεχος Αουειδανου Δουσαρει Αρρα
>
> This is the stele Mashiku bar ʿAwīda made for Dushara (Greek Dushara/Aʿra)

Other interesting light on Nabataean tradition may be gleaned from further north in the area of Suweidah (Dionysias) in the Jebel ed-Drūz. Suweidah itself was the biggest Nabataean settlement in the Ḥawrān (Butler 1904, 327-34; Wenning 1987, 38-39), though it has produced very little in the way of epigraphy (*CIS* II, 162: early 1st century A.D.). It had a Nabataean-type peristyle temple with a circumambulatory, which is similar to the Baalshamin temple at Sīʿ to the east.

Sīʿ (Butler 1909; 1919, 365-402; Sourdel 1952, 98-99; Wenning 1987, 31-38; Ball 2000, 187-88; Dentzer and Dentzer 1981; Dentzer 1985b and the extensive review of the latter by Graf [1997, III, original 1992]; Millar 1993, 394-96; Freyberger 1998, 46-55), which seems to have been closely connected even by a processional way with the nearby Decapolis city of Qanawāt 3 km away (Butler 1919, 346-51), was important specifically for religious reasons. It was a sacred site and the main centre in the region of the cult of Baalshamin and probably a focus of pilgrimage (Littmann 1943, 90-91: no. 350; Dentzer 1986b, 405).

The temple complex — three temples are recorded within it — was an irregularly shaped *temenos* on a rocky ridge divided into three parts and entered through a *propylaeum*. The first two courtyards are linked by a triple gateway. In the corner of this courtyard on a terrace is a temple stated by Butler to be dedicated to Dushara (though there is no direct evidence for this identification: Dentzer 1979; Drijvers 1986, 672). Another (arched) gateway led to the Baalshamin temple with twin towers (like the façade of a church). Unlike the "Dushara" temple, it is centrally located in its courtyard with a *cella* marked off by columns, creating an ambulatory. The doorway was decorated with vines and a bust of Baalshamin (now in the Louvre) and in front of the temple the courtyard was surrounded by a portico. There is also a third temple off the outermost court, possibly Nabataean and possibly dedicated to Dushara (Graf 1997, III, 2). The whole complex can be seen as non-Nabataean in design (Patrich 1990a, 47-48).

The inscriptions associated with the Baalshamin temple are assembled and discussed by Gurshevoi (1985) in the context of discussion of the tribe of ʿUbayshat. They are treated as Nabataean in *CIS*, but the script is not typical (Starcky 1966, cols 930-31) and there is an argument for sticking to the more general term "Aramaic". According to one inscription, an Aramaic-Greek bilingual from the architrave of the portico of the Baalshamin temple (*CIS* II, 163, with later revisions and additions: Littmann 1905, 85-90: no. 1; 1914, 76-78: no. 100; *RES* § 2023; note also Cantineau 1930-32, 13-16), in the period 33/2 B.C. to 2/1 B.C. the building of the temple was completed and architectural details are listed, though the terminology is not completely transparent: *byrtʾ gwytʾ wbyrtʾ brytʾ wtyṭrʾ dʾ wmt(llth)*, "the inner temple and the outer temple and this *theatron* and its roofing". "This *theatron*" is clearly the portico. The "inner temple" must be the *adyton*, perhaps the same as the *ʾrbʿnʾ*, perhaps also *rbʿtʾ*, elsewhere (Littmann 1914, nos. 2 and 71). The word *byrtʾ* really means "fortress" in Aramaic, though the meaning "temple" here is assured by the Greek of this inscription (damaged) and of a better preserved bilingual (*CIS* II, 164) from the same site which records the honouring of one Malīkat bar Muʿayru bar Malīkat with the erection of a statue. He appears to be the grandson of the founder of the temple referred to in *CIS* II, 163, and is credited with having built or rebuilt the "upper temple" or "upper part of the temple" (*byrtʾ ʿlytʾ*), presumably a couple of generations after his grandfather. This is discussed further in Chapter V (Baalshamin).

There are other inscriptions from the site, including an altar dedication in the time of Philip the Tetrarch (A.D. 29/30) (Littmann 1914, 78-81: no. 101; *RES* § 2117): the Herodians ruled the area at this period. A bilingual Aramaic and Greek inscription found beside the *podium* of the "Dushara" temple and probably connected with a statue fragment found nearby appears to be dedicated to the local goddess of Sīʿ, Seeia (Littmann 1909, 375-78: no. I; 1914, 81-83: no 103; Littmann et al. 1921, 364-65: no. 767). It may be to her that the "Dushara Temple" was actually dedicated (Dentzer 1979; Wenning 1987, 37; Patrich 1990a, 45-46): this makes much more sense in the absence of direct Dushara evidence and in view of the clearly secondary nature of this temple (and another off the first courtyard). In the end, therefore, there is no evidence of Dushara at Sīʿ and the only Nabataean connections are in the script used (in an untypical form) and in some aspects of the architecture of the temple. In fact, Sīʿ was not specifically Nabataean in origin or character, but a long-established "product of local communal structures, in which groups from the steppe to the east in some way shared" (Millar 1993, 395). Hence the site is marginal to the consideration of the Nabataeans of the "classical" period.

The area of southern Syria and northern Jordan is littered with Nabataean remains, including temple-sites (such as Dhībān [Wenning 1987, 62-64; Tholbecq 1997, 1082-83], el-Qaṣr [Wenning 1987, 67-68; Tholbecq 1997, 1080-81] and Dhāt Rās [Wenning 1987, 73]). For reasons of space they could not be included in this brief survey.

The Negev, Egypt and Sinai

There are many "Nabataean" sites in the Negev (Wenning 1987, 137-82), but there is considerable difficulty in distinguishing material from the period of the Nabataean kingdom from much later materials. A number of the sites have considerable Byzantine remains (see in general Negev 1983, 1986).

Elusa (Negev 1997b; Wenning 1987, 141), 20 km south-west of Beersheba, has produced little architectural evidence of the Nabataean period, but it is worth mentioning because of three pieces of evidence, one very early, the others very late. The earliest datable Nabataean inscription comes from Elusa and is assigned to the reign of Aretas I (c. 168 B.C.) or II (c. 120-96 B.C.). It refers to the creation of an *ʾtr*, possibly a sacred "place", for the life of this king (A. Cowley in Woolley and Lawrence 1915, 145-46, generally on the site 93-107; Cantineau 1932, II, 43-44). For *ʾtr* note *ʾlt dʾt ʾlʾtr*, "Allāt, mistress of the place (= the sanctuary)" in an inscription from Ṣalkhad (Littmann 1914, 22-23: no. 24; *RES* § 2052; Milik 1958, 229-30).

The very late evidence is provided by Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 315-403) (*Panarion*, 51.22, 11: ed. Holl 1922), where Elusa is one of the places where the cult of Dushara's virgin mother was celebrated annually on 6th January (Williams 1994, 51; Mordtmann 1876), and by Jerome (c. A.D. 345-420) in his *Life of Hilarion* (*PL* xxiii, 41, §§26-27) where he tells us that there was a Venus sanctuary at Elusa:

> With a great company of monks he reached Elusa, as it happened on the day when the annual festival had brought all the people together to the temple of Venus (trans. Freemantle 1968, 309).

Hilarion lived c. 291-371. We may speculate, therefore, that there had been an al-ᶜUzzā temple in Nabataean times.

Also worthy of note are Mampsis/Kurnūb 40 km south-east of Beersheba (Wenning 1987, 145-52; Negev 1997c), Sobata/es-Subēta 43 km south-west of Beersehba, where a Dushara dedication was found (*RES* § 533) (Wenning 1987, 155-56; Negev 1997d) and Nessana/Ḥafīr el-ᶜAwjā 52 km south-west of Beersheba, where a possible Nabataean temple has been identified and from which the Nessana papyri and some undated Nabataean inscriptions were recovered (Wenning 1987, 156-58; Colt 1962; Lynd-Porter 1997; inscriptions: F. Rosenthal in Colt 1962, 198-210).

Perhaps the most important Nabataean site in the Negev is ᶜAvdat, extensively excavated by Negev (Wenning 1987, 159-72; Negev 1976b, 56-63; 1976c; 1996; 1997a, with bibliography there). A temple complex has been assigned to between the middle of the 1st century B.C. and c. A.D. 70. At the centre of this complex (which was expanded in the 1st century A.D.) the temple itself on the acropolis (11 m x 13.7 m) had a frontal portico and a large room with an *adyton* and was plastered. Apart from inscriptions, there were various minor finds from the site, jewellery, etc. and statuary, including a possible al-ᶜUzzā-Aphrodite figure (Patrich 1984). There is a group of inscriptions from the *temenos* dated to the reign of Aretas IV (Negev 1961, 127-30: nos. 1-4); one may refer to a *theatron*, but this involves a speculative restoration (no. 2: Naveh 1967, 188-89, has a different reading). The temple appears to have been destroyed in the middle of the 1st century A.D. and rebuilt in the post-Nabataean period as a temple of Zeus Oboda, as is clear from Greek inscriptions (below), though Negev in 1989 identified an early Oboda temple in a tripartite structure on the south side of the main site (1996, 72-74; 1991b).

ᶜAvdat must have been an important station on a Nabataean trade route, but it is principally of interest from the religious point of view because later tradition tells us that there was an important cult there, which would have given the site its name. Stephanus of Byzantium, quoting Uranius in connection with his entry on the place-name ’Οβοδα in the *Ethnika*, states (ed. Meineke 1958, 482:15-7):

> Οὐράνιος ᾿Αραβικῶν τετάρτῳ "ὅπου ᾿Οβόδης ὁ βασιλεύς, ὃν θεοποιοῦσι, τέθαπται"
>
> Uranius in the fourth *Arabika* [says]: 'Where King Obodas, whom they deify, is buried'.

The discussion of this cult will be found in Chapter V. No tomb has been found: the one originally called "tomb of Obodas" is later in date (Jaussen, Savignac and Vincent 1905a, 82-89). On the other hand we may note some of the epigraphic evidence for the cult that comes from ʿAvdat itself. An inscription from ʿAyn ʿAvdat (Negev [with Naveh and Shaked] 1986) begins:

> *dkyr bṭb qrʾ qdm ʿbdt ʾlhʾ*...
>
> Remembered for good be he who reads (?) before ʿObodat the god ...

and refers to a statue set up before him. The publishers of the inscription assigned it to the late 1st or early 2nd century A.D. There is also a graffito, *ḥy ʿbdt*, "as ʿObodat lives" (*RES* §527; Lagrange 1904, 291-92; Jaussen, Savignac and Vincent 1905b, 238), a restored reference to ʿObodat the god in an inscription assigned to the reign of Aretas IV (Naveh 1967, 188-89, re-reading Negev 1961, 128-29: no. 2) and later Greek inscriptions dedicated to θεῷ ᾿Οβοδα (Negev 1981, 19: no. 6) and Ζεῦ ᾿Οβοδα (Negev 1981, 15: no. 3; 19: no. 6, 18: no. 4; 26: no. 7 dated A.D. 293/94: note also 13: no. 1d; 19: no. 5 and possibly 14: no. 1f). This evidence certainly points to a cult of ʿObodat at ʿAvdat. None of it resolves the question of the relationship between the god and the royal name. Stephanus of Byzantium remains the only direct evidence of this. Other inscriptions of the Nabataean period from ʿAvdat refer to Dushara, god of Gaia (Negev 1963, 113-17: no. 10), etc., while later, apart from Zeus Oboda, we also have evidence of Aphrodite (Negev 1981, 20-23: no. 7).

Further west, Sinai has yielded thousands of inscriptions, mostly graffiti, but Qaṣrāwet/Qaṣr Gheiṭ in north-western Sinai, excavated in 1975-76 (Oren 1982; Wenning 1987, 185-88; Tholbecq 1997, 1073-74; earlier excavations by Clédat in 1911: 1912), is the only site which has produced significant material remains in terms of temple architecture. It stood on an important north-south route and may have been a Nabataean stronghold concerned with the protection of trade. The older of two temples (1st century B.C.) may have undergone Nabataean adaptations on a basically Egyptian design. There were niches for betyls around the altar. The bigger temple is more definitely Nabataean in character, though with Egyptian elements, and dates to the 1st century A.D. It is aligned with the older temple and built in front of it. On an approximate east-west orientation, its main walls had engaged columns and it has a broad eastern courtyard entered by three gates and leading to a gateway into the temple itself (Plate XIV). This is square, with a colonnaded central *sanctum* containing an altar with a socket for a cult object. The colonnade arrangement allows movement around the altar by means of an ambulatory. Tholbecq (1997, 1074) drew a parallel with Tannūr, Zayadine with the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra, the Dharīḥ temple and the one at Iram (Zayadine 1990b, 38; 1990c, 155; see also Starcky 1966, cols 978-81).

Starcky (1955, 156; also Strugnell 1959, 31-35) identified Qaṣr Gheiṭ with *ʾwytw* in the first inscription from Tell esh-Shuqāfiyyeh in the eastern delta of Egypt, dated 48 or 44 B.C. (year four of a king Ptolemy):

(dnh by)tʾ d(y bnh PN)
(br ..)bw lʾlktbʾ ʾ(lhtʾ)
(ʿl) ḥyy mrʾn ṣyw ʾpklʾ
(w l ḥ)yy npšh wdy yhwh šm(h)
(dk)yr qdmyh wbʾwytw
bšlm ...

> This is the temple which PN son of PN built for al-Kutbā the goddess(?) for the life of our lord ṢYW the *afkal* and the life of himself. And may his name be remembered before her(?) and in ʾWYTW in peace ... (Clermont-Ganneau 1924b; Littmann and Meredith 1954, 227-30; Starcky 1955, 155-56; Strugnell 1959, 31-35).

The gender of al-Kutbā is discussed in Chapter V.

From Qaṣr Gheiṭ itself comes an altar-base dedicated *lʾlktbʾ*, "to al-Kutbā" (*RES* §1487 with re-reading of Strugnell 1959, 35). It was found by Clédat in 1911. It is possible, therefore, that there was a well-known temple of al-Kutbā, a deity of clear regional importance, at Qaṣr Gheiṭ.

Tell esh-Shuqāfiyyeh itself was investigated by Hammond in 1979-82, but the results have not been published and it has not produced significant remains. It may be noted that a second Shuqāfiyyeh inscription, dated 34 B.C. (Fiema and Jones 1990, revising Jones et al. 1988), was found in a local museum and is dedicated to "Dushara who is in Daphne (probably Tell ed-Defenneh south-west of Pelusium)". This indicates the presence of a Dushara temple there.

In southern Sinai we may note the possible post-Nabataean sanctuary at Jebel Moneijah. There was certainly a concentration of religious personnel there (Negev 1977b).

Religious Architecture

General

Nabataean religious architecture has many features shared with the architectural traditions of other Near Eastern peoples, but the assemblage of features is distinctive.

Starting from what is most visible in the main Nabataean sites, above all Petra itself, it may be noted that while there are features in architecture which may be vaguely classed as Hellenistic, in for example the "royal" tombs of Petra and the Khazneh, there is not the dominating impression of Hellenism which is characteristic of Palmyra, Baalbek and, at least in regard to the appearance of the minor temples, Hatra. In truth, even in Palmyra and Hatra temple architecture is not typically Hellenistic: the rejection of Hellenism is not something confined to the Jewish community of Jerusalem, where again the Herodian temple owed much to Hellenism superficially (Ball 2000, 317-96).

Nabataean temple complexes are notable for the *temenos* normally attached to the temple, as in the case of the Qaṣr el-Bint temple at Petra (Tholbecq 1997, 1083-84). Extreme examples of very large *temenoi* can be seen in Jerusalem, Palmyra and Hatra (Ball 2000, 318-25). Within the *temenos* we find a variety of buildings and installations, but most obviously the temple itself and frequently an outdoor altar. This whole style of openness contrasts, according to Ball, with the standard pattern of the Greek or Roman temple, and probably corresponds to the communal liturgical needs of the local cults.

The location within the *temenos* of the temple and its orientation are not standardized, but there is a preference for the location of the temple at one end of the *temenos* — in a corner in the case of the Qaṣr el-Bint. The open-air altar is placed opposite the temple doorway in the Qaṣr el-Bint (and compare the Bel temple at Palmyra). The whole building may form the climax of a processional way which may be connected with the town plan of the city in question (Ball 2000, 256-72). Certainly at Petra one has the distinct impression that the *temenos* gate at the end of the main street must have had liturgical significance. In Ḥegra the whole central area of the Jabal Ithlib forms a natural *temenos* approached by the processional route of a short rock-defile, the faces of which are decorated with niches and inscriptions.

There is a special interest in high places. Although it is not clear how temples were roofed, stairways to the roofs are a repeated feature (e.g. Qaṣr el-Bint, Tannūr), one that may have been picked up by Strabo, who refers to the Nabataean habit of carrying out rituals on the roofs of houses. This feature again implies a very public aspect to Nabataean temple cult and may be linked with the Nabataean penchant, shared with others, for elevated sanctuaries. The Tannūr sanctuary is the most startling example, but the so-called high-places, rock-cut ceremonial installations high in the mountains surrounding Petra and not found elsewhere (— the location at Ḥegra which is known as a high-place lacks some of the typologically significant features of true high-places, though it may well have some different cultic function —), if rightly understood as places of sacrifice, also fit the same pattern. Dussaud (1955, 37) noted the obvious implication that high mountains were in Semitic religion (if we can speak about this) traditionally regarded as *loci* of divine descent and human encounter with the divine (see Lammens 1926, 57-63).

At Petra several of the most clearly defined high-places, those on el-Madhbaḥ and el-Khubthah, are approached by purposeful and partly decorated processional ways. In the case of el-Madhbaḥ the formality of the approach is made clear by the fact that the Tomb of the Roman Soldier, the Garden Temple and the Lion Nymphaeum are passed on the way (McKenzie 1990, 172) and a monumental *propylaeum* forms an approach to the high-place itself (Ball 2000, 256).

These high-place installations (Gawlikowski 1990, 2672-74) have what are interpreted as altar tables, channels and tanks for water and other liquids, but it is by no means clear how they were used. Earlier literature on Nabataean religion tends to assume that the so-called “high-places” were meant for a sacrificial cult. It is to be emphasized that there is no direct evidence of this, either archaeological or inscriptional. Indeed, a completely different explanation of some, at least, of the high-places has been proposed and has not yet been disproved. This is the hypothesis that the high-places were connected with the funerary cult and were designed for the exposure of the dead prior to secondary burial in the elaborate tombs the Nabataeans built for themselves. Ball (2000, 67-73, after Wright 1969) suggests that this practice, with other aspects of Nabataean life, shows Iranian influence and sees the elaborate tomb-façades as repositories for ossuaries used in secondary burial. That secondary burial was practised can hardly be doubted, but this could have taken place within the tomb-complexes. Many Ḥegran tombs have both rock-cut troughs and niches *and* shelves too small for primary burial. Ball makes the point that sarcophagi are missing from the archaeological record, but ossuaries are missing too, despite the fact that they are commonplace in the Judaea of this period.

Returning to the high-places, it remains probable that animal sacrifice was carried out at these places. Indeed, did not Burckhardt take a goat for sacrifice at Jebel Harun in 1812 (though he did not reach the top)? This suggests a tradition of such mountain-top sacrifices in the region which may well go back to a very early date. Starcky (1966, col. 1008), on the other hand, is right to note that the now traditional title of one of the Petra high-places, el-Madhbaḥ, "the place of slaughter" (cf. Hebrew *mizbēaḥ*, "altar"), is an invention of the orientalists and does not reflect any known local tradition.

The Petran monument called the Deir is particularly enigmatic. It is clearly associated with a series of structures, including a circular or oval enclosure and a kind of viewing platform, which suggest it was used not as a tomb but in some high-place type of ritual (Ball 2000, 300-02). Ball (370-75) emphasizes the role that façades of this type may have played as the backdrop for activity which took place in front of rather than inside the "building". In the same context he attempts to see the Khazneh monument not as a tomb but as some sort of temple. We note elsewhere its Isis motifs.

Typology of Nabataean Religious Sites

Within the temples there are, perhaps, two features to be noted as repeated. The central focus was the *podium* on which rested (or into which were slotted) images of the deity or deities or other cult-objects. The central *sanctum* at Dharīḥ has a raised structure with slots for this kind of purpose. At the Qaṣr el-Bint temple the cult-objects were probably visible from the altar outside.

Secondly, it is common to have an arrangement of columns and walls such that it was possible to walk around the *podium* performing a circumambulation (Ball 2000, 342). Such a ritual finds a feint echo in the circumambulation of the Kaʿbah in Islam (*ṭawāf*). Such provisions for circumambulation of the central *sanctum* is clear in the temples at Tannūr, Dharīḥ, etc., though in the case of the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra (Hammond 1996, 113-14) and indeed in other instances, there appears to be insufficient room for any elaborate circumambulation in the manner of the later Islamic *ṭawāf.* The free-standing *podium* arrangement may be of Iranian origin (Glueck 1965, 160).

Augé (1999, relying partly on Tholbecq 1997; cf. 1999) distinguishes these built sanctuaries ("sanctuaires construits/bâtis") and rock installations ("installations rupestres"). The main temples of the Nabataean period share the same period of construction or reconstruction, the late 1st century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D., and have in common the feature of an elevated platform in the *cella* of the temple reached by steps. Sometimes the temple is divided into three sections, of which the *cella* is the most enclosed (Qaṣr el-Bint, Dharīḥ). The raised platforms sometimes show evidence of arrangements for steles or statues, while dividing walls, which were often plastered and painted, sometimes support engaged columns and contain niches which might also have contained steles or statues. In some cases the columns are detached, allowing passage outside an inner area. There is not, however, a typical Nabataean plan (Patrich 1990a, 45). The temples have different numbers of rooms around the *cella* (or none), different modes of access (single/double stairs) and sometimes exterior arrangements (basins, exterior altars) (see Plate XIV). Tholbecq (1997, 1088) speaks of "un processus en cours" rather than a fixed formula, noting also some differences between the northern and southern areas. In the latter there is more Egyptian influence. Indeed, there are parallels in a great variety of traditions (Iranian, Arabian, Syrian), though the influence of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt is most prominent (Augé 1999, 40).

Knauf (1986, 77-78) and Niehr (1998, 223-25) distinguish more simply two types of temple, a Syrian type with an *adyton*, the cult-object being placed against the rear wall of the temple (Qaṣr el-Bint) and an Arabian type with a free-standing *sanctum* arranged to allow circumambulation (Plate XIV).

The "installations rupestres" (Augé 1999, 37, following the more detailed treatment of Nehmé 1997) include high-places (Madhbaḥ, Khubthah), terraces, *triclinia* (including two-sided and semi-circular examples), cult-chambers, ensembles of niches and platforms. Some installations are connected with water sources (Qaṭṭar ed-Deir, Sidd el-Maʿājin, ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh) or are located on processional ways (the Sīq).

Nehmé (1997, specifically 1046-48) notes two dichotomies which help us to see more clearly the pattern of Nabataean religious practices: between public and private on the one hand and between collective and individual on the other. On this basis we see that three categories of Nabataean cultic space emerge:
(i) the public communal (the main temples and high-places);
(ii) the private communal (localized cults at small private and often secluded sanctuaries, often terraces, cults of particular deities such as Isis, cults based on social groupings especially exemplified by *mrzḥyʾ* of particular professional associations — slaves, scribes, workmen, soldiers);
(iii) private individual cultic acts (isolated niche-carvings, etc.).

Excursus: Architectural and Related Terms

A number of architectural and similar terms for parts of the physical arrangements of temples, etc. are preserved in inscriptions, often inscriptions recording building or rebuilding work and rededications. A number are from the Ḥawrān and Sinai and must be treated with caution.

The term *bytʾ* would be expected to be used for "temple", though it does not occur very often in this context. Dushara is sometimes called "Lord of the House", as in JS I, 213-16 Nab. no. 57:2. The same title is found in an inscription from below the el-Khubthah high-place (*RES* § 1088) and at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh (Savignac 1933, 415-15: no. 4). *CIS* II, 182 records the building or re-building (*bnh*) of a *bytʾ*: for Allāt at Ṣalkhad. There is reference at Ḥegra to *byt qyšʾ*, "the temple of Qaysha" (H 36:9), and even the obscure deity Asharu had a temple (*RES* § 2053).

We may note also the term *bytyʾ*, evidently used in Sinai as a term for a temple official (*DNWSI,* 163; Cantineau 1932, II, 71: *CIS* II, 1814, 1969, 2068, 2514, 2648, 2845). *DNWSI* offers the translation "administrator", drawing a parallel with the Greek διοικητής and οἰκονόμος (Díez Merino 1969, 274-75; Negev 1977b, 229; for Greek inscriptions see Waddington 1968, nos. 2463, 2547, etc.).

byrtʾ is apparently used for "temple" in a Ḥawrān inscription which distinguishes the inner and the outer temple (Littmann 1914, 76-78:

no. 100). Littmann suggested it meant the same as *ʾrbʿnʾ* in another inscription (Littmann 1914, 2-6: no. 2). (See on Sīʿ above and Baalshamin in Chapter V.)

There are, in fact, two terms related to the root RBʿ and meaning "square" or "cubic", but there is considerable disagreement about precise meanings. *rbʿtʾ* appears in a Greek-Nabataean bilingual from Sidon (*CIS* II, 160). The Greek clearly indicates that what is going on is the dedication of a sanctuary to Dushara and the term appears to mean "*cella*, rectangular sanctuary" (so *DNWSI*, 1058). It also appears in inscriptions from Bosra (clearly dedicated to a god: *RES* § 2092) and Kharabah in the Ḥawrān (*RES* § 482, 88). Where it appears in the Nabataean inscription from Cos, Levi della Vida (1938, 144) interpreted it as "oggetto rettangolare" or "tavola" (the tablet of the inscription), but a meaning "sanctuary" is much more likely: it appears in the phrase *rbʿtʾ [wṣlm]tʾ*, "sanctuary and statue" (if correctly restored). Finally *rbʿtʾ* appears in the second inscription from Tell esh-Shuqāfiyyeh (Jones et al 1988; Fiema and Jones 1990) dated A.D. 34, recording the dedication of a temple to Dushara of Daphne. The editors use the term "quadrangular shrine". Probably a variant with the same meaning is *ʾrbʿnʾ*, in the A.D. 72/73 dedication *dnh ʾrbʿnʾ dy ʿbd ... ʿl ʿl[tʾ* (*RES* § 2036; Littmann 1914, 2-6: no. 2, see also 13-14) from Umm es-Surab in the Ḥawrān. If the restoration is correct, the *ʾrbʿnʾ* was built *over* the altar. Again it is translated "tetragonal niche, chapel" (*DNWSI*, 102). In the context of Nabataean architecture it might refer to the square *cella* above an altar (Littmann 1914, 5). It is tempting to see a connection with the cubic temples, *kaʿbah*s, of pre-Islamic Arabia (Dussaud 1905, 176; Gawlikowski 1990, 2665). Whatever about this, as we shall see in the discussion of Dushara in Chapter IV, a passage in Epiphanius referring to a χααμου is too doubtful to justify making a connection with Arabic *kāʿib*, *kaʿbah*.

Earlier thought to mean "incense altar" is *ḥmnʾ*, which appears in an inscription dated A.D. 124 from Deir el-Meshqūq (Littmann 1914, 24-27: no. 27: *dnh ḥmnʾ dy ʿbd ...* ; *RES* § 2053) and in the Nabataean incantation text published by Naveh (1979, 112-3: line 3) (*DNWSI*, 382). Largely on the basis of Palmyrene evidence Drijvers (1988) has shown that it corresponds to *nwsʾ*, itself based on Greek ναός, and means "temple" or refers to some part thereof (see also Ugaritic *ḫmn*, del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 1996, 193).

There arose from the older interpretation of *ḥmnʾ* as "incense-altar" the possibility of interpreting *ʾtr* in a title of Allāt (*ʾlt dʾt ʾlʾtr*:

Littmann 1914, 22-23: no. 24), commonly regarded as a place-name or meaning “place, sacred place” (*RES* § 2052; Milik 1958, 229-30), as an Iranian loan meaning “fire altar” (Starcky 1982, 196). But this is unlikely and a vaguer meaning “place, sacred place”, fits the evidence. Thus in *RES* § 2052 the word is incorporated into the title of Allāt, *rbt ʾlʾtr* or *dʾt ʾlʾtr*, “Allāt, mistress of the place (= the sanctuary)” (Littmann 1914, 22-23: no. 24; Milik 1958, 229-30). However, *ʾlʾtr* could be a place-name. Nor does *ʾtr* always mean “sanctuary”. In inscriptions at Ḥegra, the “place” in question may sometimes be for the building of a tomb (JS I, 207-08: no. 43; 211-12: no. 54; 212: no. 56; see also 227: no. 100), though the owner of the “place” in JS I, Nab. no. 56, *ʿbdʿbdt br ʾrybs*, had his tomb elsewhere (H 9, B 7) (Milik and Starcky 1970, 155). In H 31:7 (cf. H 34:8) the reference is clearly to a tomb (and this may be the allusion in the Turkmāniyyeh inscription, *CIS* II, 350: 3). On the other hand in the old Nabataean inscription from Elusa, the reference is clearly to a religious location (A. Cowley in Woolley and Lawrence 1915, 145-46, generally on the site 93-107; Cantineau 1930-32, II, 43-44) and this is clearly true also in the case of JS I, 213-16 Nab. no. 57:2, where the reference is to the locus of a private cult, and JS II, 223-24: no. 83. The Jabal Ithlib at Ḥegra is a specifically religious area of the site with no tombs.

Sacred enclosures (Arabic *ḥaram* and *ḥimā*) are a distinctive feature of pre-Islamic Arabian sanctuaries (Wellhausen 1897^2, 102-12; Lammens 1926; Gawlikowski 1982, 301; Mettinger 1995, 71). Such precincts were often cultivated and animals were allowed to roam about with hunting banned, as at the *ḥimā* of Allāt at Ṭāʾif. The Nabataean term *mḥrmtʾ* appears in several Nabataean texts and may correspond to the Arabic terms (Lacerenza 1988-89, 130-31). The most informative inscriptions are from the Ḥawrān and al-Jawf. The first, from Kharayeb, is dated A.D. 101 and refers to the making of a *mḥrmtʾ* for Dushara (Starcky 1985, 181). The al-Jawf inscription is dated A.D. 44 and also refers to the building of a *mḥrmtʾ* for Dushara (Savignac and Starcky 1957). In *CIS* II, 158, from Pozzuoli, the reference is clearly to a sanctuary (Lacerenza 128-31). In some cases at Bosra the *mḥrmtʾ* appears to belong to a private individual and it has been taken to refer to a “reserved seat” in the theatre (*RES* § 2093, 2094), though this is rejected by Gawlikowski (1982, 301).

Although it is hard to identify any Arabian-type *ḥimā* among the Nabataean monuments (possibly the oval enclosure in front of the Deir at Petra), an obvious feature of many Nabataean temples is the *temenos*. No clear term for the *temenos* has survived. We may note, however, the *ḥgbʾ*, which occurs alongside a *mṣbʾ* as the subject of a dedication in a Palmyrene text found near Tripoli in Lebanon dated A.D. 182 (Aggoula 1977: full discussion there; Gawlikowski 1982, 302). It refers to the place where the *mṣbʾ* is located. It also occurs in the Palmyrene text from the sanctuary of Allāt published by Drijvers (1982), again referring to the sanctuary and its role as a place of asylum. The word is related to Arabic *ḥajaba*, "to veil", and is found also in Syriac (ܚܘܓܒܐ : *ḥugbā*) as a term in the Peshitta for a cultic "high-place" (2 Chron 33:19; 34:4) and elsewhere in Syriac (*TS* 1190-91). Aggoula explores its Arabian connections (1977).

Within sanctuaries the *cella* is the most important installation. *qṣrʾ* was initially taken to mean "*cella*" in *CIS* II, 336, but Beyer and Livingstone (1987, 291) read *ḥgrʾ* ("dedicated object"), and in any case this inscription is not Nabataean but earlier Aramaic. *ḥgrʾ* may occur also with the meaning "enclosure" in JS II, 219: Nab no. 329: *dnh ḥgrʾ dy dkrw*. There is another uncertain occurrence of *qṣrʾ* meaning "*cella*" at Iram (Savignac and Horsfield 1935, 265-68: no. 1:3), but in another text *qṣryʾ* is taken to mean "camp, *castra*" (Starcky 1971).

masgᵉdā is a term of fairly wide use (*DNWSI*, 663). A cult-niche with a betyl in it is normally so called (JS I, 204-06: no. 39:1 above a relief stele dedicated to Aʿra; see also JS I, 223: no. 82), but it can also mean "altar" and "sanctuary" (Littmann 1914, 73; Teixidor 1977, 85). This is clear from occurrences in inscriptions from the Ḥawrān. Three are on altars dedicated to Baalshamin (*RES* §2051 = Littmann 1914, 21-22: no. 23), Allāt (§ 2052 = Littmann 1914, 22-23: no. 24) and Dushara (Milik 1958, 231-35: no. 2:1). The verbs used are *ʿbd*, *qrb* and *ʿbd* respectively. Several are on steles (§§ 83, 2052, *CIS* II, 185 [*qrb*, "offered"]); *CIS* II, 161:1 [*hqym*, "erected"]; §2051, *CIS* II, 190 [*ʿbd*, "made"]). On the other hand, one inscription from near Ṣalkhad marks the "building" (*bnh*) of a *msgdʾ* (*RES* § 2024; Starcky 1966, col. 1008). The basic meaning is "place/means of worship": it is linguistically identical with Arabic *masjid*, used later in the Islamic context. Lammens (1926, 91-92) noted that the term was used in this way in pre-Islamic north Arabia.

There are also depictions of altars (sometimes horned) on rock-faces (Niehr 1998, 227-28).

We know that a *theatron*, i.e. a place from which the congregation could view the ritual action, often played a part in the structure of Nabataean and post-Nabataean temples (see discussion of Negev

1965, 192-95; Starcky and Strugnell 1966, 242-43). The word *tyṭrʾ*, "viewing place", corresponding to Greek θέατρον, appears several times, most clearly in the dedication of the Sīʿ temple of Baalshamin (*CIS* II, 163:2 [*RES* 803, 2023]); the same text refers to other parts of the structure, "the inner and outer temple (*byrtʾ*)") (Starcky and Strugnell 1966, 242-43; Littmann 1905, 85-90) and it is also restored in a text from ʿAvdat: Negev (1961, 128-29: no. 2 [*qrb*]) translates it "portico". It is reported also in an unpublished inscription of Aretas IV's reign found in the Great Church at Petra (Tholbecq 1997, 1084; Schick et al. 1993, 61), and we have seen earlier that the Qaṣr el-Bint temple was provided with a *theatron* (see Starcky and Strugnell 1966, 242-43).

From the Ḥawrān we have the dedication to Shayʿ-al-Qawm of an *ʾrktʾ* (see Shayʿ-al-Qawm below; *RES* §§ 471, 86; Dussaud and Macler 1903, 309-10: no. 8). The verb used is *ʿbd.* The word was at first interpreted as meaning "sarcophagus", but you cannot have a sarcophagus dedicated to a god and far more likely is some architectural meaning such as "pillar" or "portico". There is probably a connection, explained through the weakening of the distinction between /ʿ/ and /ʾ/, with the architectural term *ʿrkwtʾ* in the Turkmāniyyeh inscription at Petra (Healey 1993, 240).

An important term probably referring to part of the altar installation is *mwtbʾ*, but since this only occurs as a divine attribute it is discussed under Objects of Worship in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NABATAEAN GOD AND GODDESS

Considerable use has been made in what follows of the excellent survey of Nabataean deities by Starcky (1966, cols 985-1005), though we also acknowledge the contributions of other scholars (Teixidor 1977, 82-94; Zayadine 1989; Niehr 1998, 219-34; Höfner 1965a). The treatment here brings the inscriptions to the fore.

The Nabataean Conception of the Gods

The Nabataean gods are rendered more mysterious than those of other contemporary peoples by a number of specific factors. While they appear to represent the usual forces of nature, causing springs to flow, producing lightning and storm, etc., and are associated with mountains, fertile gorges and stars, they do not have names like the names of the Greek, Roman and Mesopotamian gods. Their so-called names are mostly titles describing particular attributes or aspects of the deity (Wenning and Merklein 1997, 105) and the main local god and goddess came to be regarded, especially by non-locals, as manifestations of the supreme god or the god associated with the politically dominant élite. Thus the titles or names of gods vary from place to place, while at another level there is a trend towards a simplification of the complex world of the gods, with a few major deities absorbing the roles of local ones.

This complicates the question of whether the Nabataeans had any concept of a pantheon or assembly of the gods. Both concepts can be detected, for example, in Ugaritic religion, where the assembly of the gods appears a number of times in mythological texts as a specific object of worship and pantheon lists give a theologically constructed overview of how the Ugaritic theologians saw the whole world of the gods (Healey 1985; 1988). Even in pre-Islamic Arabia, where each tribal (or other) group had its own deity and nobody worshipped the whole set of deities, it is clear that the Meccan Kaʿbah had what might be called an incipient pantheon: several different gods were worshipped there, with Allāh having a family associated with him. So far as Nabataean religion is concerned it is not clear that there was a hierarchical pantheon despite the plethora of divine titles (Macdonald 1991, 112; Wenning and Merklein 1997, 105-06).

Dushara, the main Nabataean god, was a *new* god who, as we shall see, gained prominence through association with the Nabataean state. He was a minor local god (or local version of some major deity: see discussion of Ruḍā below) and does not, therefore, come to prominence with a pantheon in tow. There is, as might be expected, very little evidence in Nabataean on which we can base an answer to the question of a pantheon, but there are some slight pointers in favour of the assumption that a process of gathering the gods together in a pantheon was in train.

Firstly, there is the fact that in the lists of gods which appear in the curses and fines on Ḥegran tombs there is some element of order, perhaps not yet a fixed order, but nevertheless some sort of order. Setting aside cases where only Dushara is mentioned, we have the following:

Dushara, Manōtu and (her) Qaysha (H 8)
Dushara, his *mwtbʾ*, Allāt of ʿAmnad, Manōtu and (her) Qaysha (H 16)
Dushara, Hubal(u), Manōtu (also H 16)
Dushara and Manōtu (H 19, H 31, H 34).

This rather limited database suggests that Dushara, Manōtu and Qaysha formed a group, at least in the Ḥegran context. It must be noted, however, that Manōtu is very much a local deity of the Ḥijāz (as is also Hubal), so that one cannot on this basis arrive at conclusions about Nabataean religion in general.

It is not so easy to find evidence from elsewhere in the Nabataean realm, but there are other pairings of deities (see below) and indications of a familial relation among some of the gods. Notable is the possible reference in an inscription from Ṣalkhad to Allāt as *ʾm ʾlhyʾ dy mʾrnʾ rbʾl*, "mother of the gods of our lord Rabel" (*CIS* II, 185: readings uncertain — see on Allāt below), which seems to imply a pantheon associated with the king or approved by the king, just as Dushara is called "god of our lord the king" (below). Note may also be made of the later evidence of Epiphanius on Dushara's virgin mother (see below on Dushara). A familial relationship among the gods may also be reflected in the design of the numerous Nabataean niches containing two or three betyls (possibly a divine couple plus a junior partner or offspring of the couple: see Chapter VI).

Beyond this we may note the fact that Dushara could be referred to in association with all the other gods in a summary grouping. Thus in an inscription from Sidd el-Maᶜājin in Petra, in a niche, we find a blessing:

> *mn qdm dwšrʾ wʾlhyʾ klhm*
>
> from before Dushara and all the gods (Dalman 1912, 83: no. 28; *RES*§ 1401; Knauf 1990a).

The same expression, "Dushara and all the gods", appears twice in one of the Ḥegra tomb inscriptions (H 11:6, 8). In the Turkmāniyyeh inscription (*CIS* II, 350:3-4), we find slightly longer expressions: *dwšrʾ ʾlh mrʾnʾ wmwtbh ḥryšʾ wʾlhyʾ klhm*, "Dushara, god of our Lord (the king) and his sacred throne and all the gods". The *mwtbʾ* was venerated as a separate entity.

Our very tentative conclusion is that there are some indications of the formation of a pantheon structure, perhaps under royal patronage in the context of Rabel II's putative reforms. Thus one of the inscriptions from ᶜAyn esh-Shallāleh lists the main gods (only the names of Dushara and Baalshamin survive) and calls them *ʾlhy mrʾnʾ*, "gods of our lord (the king)" (Savignac 1934, 576-77: no. 19). The indications are, however, that this was not a canonical pantheon list, or at least that a variety of local pantheons existed in different regions.

This regional element in the list of the Nabataean gods is important and it is reflected also in the distribution of personal names throughout the Nabataean realm (Negev 1986, 1991a). As will become clear below, so far as the inscriptions are concerned Dushara is the only deity who was certainly worshipped throughout Nabataea. Allāt and al-ᶜUzzā are also probably to be regarded as national, though they appear to alternate, Allāt being worshipped exclusively in one place, al-ᶜUzzā in another. Allāt, for example, is not mentioned by name in any inscription from Petra. Apart from these three, the other Nabataean deities enjoyed a popularity which was fairly restricted. Manōtu and Hubal, for example, are found only in the north Arabian sphere.

There is a fairly clear socio-political explanation for this, the fact that the élite who ruled the Nabataean state incorporated a variety of regions into their own long-established traditions. This introduced new divinities and new divine names into the divine body politic. Perhaps the clearest example is Baalshamin, a Syrian deity who was turned into a Nabataean god as a result of Nabataean expansion into southern Syria. The other side of this coin was the spread of Dushara, for example, to the "Safaitic" tribes and to the Ḥawrān. However, this hegemony was not exercised at the expense of existing local gods. They were either simply worshipped alongside Dushara (in the Safaitic case) or Dushara was identified with the local high god.

Before proceeding to the individual deities we may note two percipient remarks of the late Jean Starcky, the doyen of Nabataean religious studies (1982). Firstly the Nabataean pantheon, if we can so call it, appears to be a very small one. There are far less deities than one finds in other ancient and contemporary pagan cultures such as that of South Arabia or that of Palmyra. Indeed there may be an ancient awareness of this restriction in the number of gods in so far as Herodotus stated that the Arabs had only two gods (*Histories*, III, 8: ed. Rosén 1987; trans. adapted from de Sélincourt 1996^2, 156):

> Διόνυσον δὲ θεῶν μοῦνον καὶ τὴν Οὐρανίην ἡγέονται εἶναι ... ὀνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον ʼΟροτάλ, τὴν δὲ Οὐρανίην ʼΑλιλάτ.
>
> The only gods they recognize are Dionysos and Urania ... Dionysos in their language is Orotal, and Urania Alilat.

Strabo makes the same assertion, naming Zeus and Dionysos (16.1.11). It is not obvious what the reason for this might be, but it is certainly consistent with a constellation of other features of Nabataean religion — aniconism particularly — which *might* suggest a predisposition to the kind of puritanical religion found among the Nabataeans' close neighbours, the Jews, and later inherited by the Nabataeans' successors, the Muslim Arabs.

Closely related is Starcky's second point, the suggestion that the Nabataean pantheon should be understood as the pre-Islamic Meccans understood their Kaᶜbah, where "associationism" was the main feature rather than "polytheism" pure and simple. The precise situation in pre-Islamic Mecca in this regard is open to a variety of interpretations (see Brockelmann 1922; Henninger 1981, 12, 15; recently Hawting 1999), but there may have been not only polytheists who regarded Allāh as one among a host of gods but also worshippers of Allāh as a "High God" who treated all other gods as of secondary status, perhaps as mediators before Allāh or gods of first recourse while Allāh was the god of ultimate recourse (Watt 1971). There were also the *ḥunafāʾ*, the pre-Muḥammad monotheists supposedly still clinging to the religion of Abraham in some degraded form: this group may overlap at least partly with the worshippers of the "High God" Allāh.

Even in pre-Islamic times Allāh was distinct at Mecca because he had no idol. But idols had come to be associated with him and this was the issue in the Islamic reform (Peters 1994, 27-29). Thus at first

> Muhammad was not concerned with regulating the life of a community of believers ... but rather with reforming the beliefs and practices of his fellow Meccans. 'Reforming' is a more appropriate term than 'converting,' because the Quran also reveals ... that the worship of Allāh was already well established there before Muhammad. What was at question, then, was not simply belief in or worship of Allāh, which the Quraysh certainly did, but the Meccans' 'association,' as the Quran calls it, of other deities with Allāh, a practice that seemed to accept the existence of other gods in the 'exalted assembly' while at the same time denying that they had any autonomous power, though perhaps they could help men if God so willed. (Peters 1994, 28-29)

It was thus the *associationism* (Arabic *al-širk*) of the associaters (*al-muš-rikūn*) which was the object of Muḥammad's and Islam's condemnation of what was going on in the Kaʿbah and his religious revolution consisted essentially of removing the associated "gods" which were detracting from the uniqueness of Allāh (Gimaret 1997). Polytheists were condemned on this basis; Christians escaped full condemnation since theirs was a book-religion, though the Trinity was condemned for its implicit associationism (Hawting 1999, 46-47).

Whatever about the details in pre-Islamic Mecca, Starcky's claim is that for the Nabataeans the concept of the gods would be in principle henotheistic, with concentration on the worship of a single deity. This does not exclude the possibility that the one god might have a spouse or partner (as Yahweh may have had Asherah as his spouse: see Hadley 2000; Keel and Uehlinger 1998, 210-48, more negative on an Israelite Asherah cult than Day 1986): a partner or spouse would be essential even for the one true god. This is, therefore, a "qualified monotheism" (Lambert 1975, 198). In the Nabataean context one suspects the god and his partner formed a "dyotheistic" pair, while all other named deities are of a different order, associated with the main deity but not treated as his equal.

Thus Macdonald states that "Nabataean religion knew only two deities (one male, one female), each of whom had numerous aspects, the names of which grew out of epithets" (1991, 112, agreeing on this with Knauf 1985a, 110-11; 1986, 78). According to this view the divine pair, essentially Dushara and Allāt, had different forms in different places. Thus they appear as Qōs-Zeus-Hadad and Atargatis(-Derketo?) at Tannūr. According to Lindner (1988, 89) different versions were worshipped by different social groups (see also Wenning 1997, 195; Nehmé 1997, 1045).

On this basis Dushara (or the god behind the title: see below) was regarded as *the* god *par excellence* and this would in part explain why the name of Dushara appears rather rarely in theophoric personal names (Negev 1986, 14; 1991a, nos. 797, 1217), while derivatives of *ʾlhʾ*, "the god" (*ʾlhy* etc.), appear quite often (Negev 1991a, 155; Teixidor 1977, 83). "The god" in the Nabataean context meant "the one and only significant god, also known as Dushara". In other words there was no need for further specification as to which deity was being referred to. Starcky (1987a, 43) refers to "une certaine suivance de la notion du Divin, indépendamment des idoles". Taken in conjunction with the fact that the Nabataeans, like the pre-Islamic Meccans, regarded the main god as of a different rank from the others, this amounts to a *de facto* monotheizing tendency.

Dushara, the Nabataean God

As will become clear in what follows, there are considerable difficulties in disentangling the names of the Nabataean gods and establishing the identity of *the* Nabataean god, i.e. the supreme deity. That a concept such as that of supreme deity existed among the Nabataeans (as opposed to belief in a variety of gods with more or less equal status and special areas of responsibility) is fairly clear. All the evidence suggests that when the Nabataeans venerated Dushara they were directing their worship to a supreme god, above all others. It turns out, however, that a number of other divine names most probably also refer to the same deity. Indeed the name Dushara is in origin an epithet, so that scholars have been much concerned with trying to find the true name of this supreme god.

It would be nice to arrive at sufficient clarity to enable us to speak precisely of, e.g., Dushara-Ruḍā or Dushara-al-Kutbā, but such artificial titles would elevate to the level of fact hypotheses which cannot be proved absolutely and misleadingly imply 100% overlap between the pairs of deities, when in fact the assimilations involved may have in some cases been inspired by minor or local aspects of the cult of the particular deity. In this context it makes good sense to think in terms of "the Nabataean God", keeping in mind that he goes under various names, some of which are derived from other traditions. To some extent, therefore, our study of the Nabataean God comprises of a catalogue of these assimilations.

It is clear that Dushara was the main deity worshipped by the Nabataeans. Apart from the particularly informative inscriptions to be cited below, he appears in many other religious dedications from Petra, Ḥegra, Taymāᵓ, the Ḥawrān, Sidon, Sinai etc. (e.g. *CIS* II, 160, 190, 338, 401, 912; JS I, 211: no. 52, 236: no. 142, 241: no. 169). That Dushara (Dusares) was seen as the god of the Arabs in the Roman literary tradition is clear from Tertullian (c. A.D. 160-225): "Every individual province, every city, has its own god; Syria has Atargatis; Arabia, Dusares ..." (*Apology*, xxiv, 8: following the text of Bindley 1889; see also *Ad nationes*, ii, 8). The god was carried westwards into the Roman Empire and must have been well known (Tran Tam Tinh 1972: 127-31, 141-47). We shall refer below to evidence from Miletus, Delos and Pozzuoli. Several detailed treatments of this god in the Nabataean context exist (Starcky 1966, cols 986-93; Teixidor 1977, 82-5; Sourdel 1952, 59-68; Höfner 1965a, 433-5; Gawlikowski 1990, 2662-65; Niehr 1998, 220-21). Dushara in the context of Greek and Roman religion and the cults of stones have also been studied (Cook 1940, 907-20 and for, the later Greek allusions to Dushara, Mordtmann 1876).

We have already seen that Dushara's predominant position among the gods is made clear not only by the fact that he is always named first in any pairing or listing, but also that his name can be followed by the phrase "and all the gods" (*RES* § 1401; Dalman 1912, no. 28; H 11: 6, 8). In the Turkmāniyyeh tomb inscription the tomb and its associated installations are sacred to *dwšrᵓ ᵓlh mrᵓnᵓ wmwtbh ḥryšᵓ wᵓlhyᵓ klhm*, "Dushara the god of our lord (the king) and his sacred throne and all the gods" (*CIS* II, 350:3-4; Milik 1959).

As will be seen, it is clear that the name Dushara is in origin an epithet, a descriptive title of the god probably associating him with a particular place. Starcky (1966, col. 987) took the view that the general absence of Dushara from personal names indicates that this was not his "original" name. Such divine titles are commonplace in Ancient Near Eastern religion. We may note the Baᶜal Peᶜor, "Lord-god of Peᶜor", etc. of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Deut. 4:3) and the "Baᶜal of Ḥarran" in Zincirli Aramaic (Tropper 1993: B3:1). Even closer analogies are found in the title of Yahweh in Judges 5:5 and Ps 68:9, "He (*zeh*) of Sinai", the various Epigraphic South Arabian divine titles like Dhū-S^{1}amāwī (Höfner 1965b, 527-28) and the Lihyanite Dhū-Ghābat (vocalizations hypothetical).

It is a widely held view, therefore, that Dushara's name is to be explained on the basis of a putative Arabic ذو الشراة, *D̲ū al-Šarā(t)*, meaning "the one of (i.e. 'Lord of') the Sharā(t) mountain range". The latter is well documented in the Arab geographers as the name of a region of southern Jordan corresponding more or less to ancient Edom and the term was used in Burkhardt's time. This region had, according to some sources, its capital at Udhruḥ east of Petra (Le Strange 1890, index 598; Zayadine 1989, 115). This is an attractive suggestion which would locate Dushara firmly in southern Jordan as a regional deity. There is even a possible occurrence of the place-name in a Nabataean inscription from Ḥegra: *dy nḥt lšrʾ*, "who went down to Sharā", though we cannot be sure whether the place in question is in southern Jordan or further south in the Ḥijāz (JS I, 229: no. 109, with discussion of possible identifications).

The Nabataean spelling of the *d̲ū-* element in *dwšrʾ*, with /d/, would reflect the Arabic or Ancient North Arabian original (etymological *d̲* becoming *d* — *d̲* does not survive in Nabataean Aramaic). Apart from the later Arabic, this is supported by the usual Hismaic form *d̲-s^{2}ry* (Macdonald and King 1999, 437). The normal "Safaitic" form *ds^{2}r* (*d̲-s^{2}ry* also occurs), where, arguably, the etymology of the name would have been transparent, is a loan from Nabataean (Macdonald 1995, 761; 2000, 46, 48; see *CIS* V 57, etc.), indicating that the writers of the "Safaitic" inscriptions received Dushara second-hand from Aramaic-speakers.

The pronunciation and interpretation of the second part of the name are, however, a little more problematic. The Greek transcription of the name is Δουσάρης, etc. (below; note also from Greek Syriac ܕܘܣܐܪܝܣ, *TS*, 845; see Eusebius, *On the Theophania*, ii, 12: ed. S. Lee 1842). In Latin we find "Dusares" (Tertullian, *Apology*, xxiv, 8: ed. Bindley 1889).

Nabataean ש represents the Semitic phonemes /š/ and /ś/ and in most Aramaic dialects of this period /ś/ had lost distinctive pronunciation distinguishing it from /s/ (represented by ס). The etymologies suggested for the second part of Dushara's name (below) would point to a standard Aramaic pronunciation with /s/(< /ś/). However, one would then expect a mixture of spellings, *dwšrʾ* and *dwsrʾ*, but the latter is never attested. This reinforces the argument of Macdonald (2000, 46) on the basis of Beeston's work (1962) that in Nabataean Aramaic etymological /ś/ had not merged with /s/ and was probably realized as /ç/ (Ich-Laut). It thus appears likely that the god's name was pronounced in Nabataean Aramaic as /dūçarā/. This peculiarity of the Aramaic of the Nabataeans must be accounted a further example of Arabic (or Early North Arabian) colouring in this form of Aramaic.

So far as the immediate issue is concerned, on the whole, it is best to regard the name as a borrowing from some language related to an early form of Arabic, as the un-Aramaic initial *d/ḏū-* implies, and we here stick to the now traditional rendition of the name as Dushara.

The interpretation of the name is also difficult (Buhl 1913; Starcky 1966, 986-87). In Arabic sources (e.g., Ibn al-Kalbī's *Book of Idols*, ed. Ahmed Zeki Pacha 1924², 38) the god's name is given as ذو الشّرىٰ (*Ḏū al-Šarā*), not ذو الشراة with *tāʾ marbūṭah*, and this fits much better with the Nabataean version, since the Nabataean version of the name presupposes that the noun involved is masculine not feminine. The Nabataean reflex of Arabic ذو الشراة ought to be *dwšrt* or *dwšrtʾ*. This difficulty might be bypassed on the assumption that the Arab geographers were unaware of any connection between the locality in southern Jordan they were referring to and the normal spelling of the divine name *Ḏū al-Šarā*. In later times the god was associated with a more southerly locale in the Arabian peninsula, and in any case, with regard to the spelling they give for the place-name, they were possibly simply trying to render the name into the Arabic script as best they could and would not need to distinguish شراة and شرى.

Although the above, widely held, interpretation of Dushara's name as that the god of a particular mountain cannot be excluded, we should also consider the possibility that the second part of the name might be a common noun, so that the whole epithet describes not a particular geographical location but a general characteristic of the deity.

Buhl (1913), followed by Starcky (1966, 986-87), noted Arabic شَرًّى, "road, tract of land, mountain" (Lane, 1545), sometimes used in the context of sacred land. Beeston (1968) noted شَرْىً, "colocynth, spreading plant", claiming a meaning identifying the god as a vegetation deity. Final certainty cannot be reached on this, but I am inclined to suspect a meaning along the lines of "He of the vegetation". Zayadine

(1989, 115) suggests a possible meaning connected with luxuriant vegetation and wild animals, while Beeston notes in this context the Quranic phrase *aṣḥāb al-aykah* (15:78; 38:12-13; 50:13-14). This phrase appears to mean "men of the thicket/tanglewood" and may hide an allusion to Dushara's name, since "the men of the thicket" were preached to by Shuᶜayb, the prophet otherwise stated to have been sent to the traders of Madyan/Midian. The proposal is further supported by Bosworth (1984).

An incidental detail in one of the early Islamic references to Dushara may also point to his location by a stream at the foot of a mountain rather than as a mountain-god on top of the mountain. This is Ibn Hishām's account of the conversion of al-Ṭufayl b. ᶜAmr al-Dawsī, who confronted his wife, urging her to clarify her conversion, saying: "'Then go to the *ḥinā* (probably *ḥimā*, "*temenos*") of Dhuʾl Sharā and cleanse yourself from it.' Now Dhuʾl Sharā was an image belonging to Daus and the *ḥimā* was the *temenos* which they made sacred to him; in it there was a trickle of water from a rivulet from a mountain ... So she went and washed ..." and was converted (Wüstenfeld 1859-60, 253; Guillaume 1955, 176; see Wellhausen 1897^{2}, 48-49). Apart from the light this casts on Dushara, it is also a noteworthy example of a ritual of disassociation or de-initiation.

This kind of explanation of Dushara's name would find a ready analogy in the name of the main Lihyanite deity, Dhū-Ghābat, which almost certainly means "He of the thicket" (*ġābah*, "forest, thicket") (Höfner 1965a, 438; Caskel 1953, 44). There may be an allusion to the association between the Dedanites and forests in Isaiah 21:13 (al-Fassi 1993, 232).

However, alternative etymologies for the common noun or locations for a geographical name Sharā are also possible. Gawlikowski (1990, 2663) sees Sharā as effectively meaning the same as *ḥimā* or *ḥaram*, and a much older origin reflected in cuneiform cannot be ruled out, since in ancient Mesopotamia the divine name ^{d}*Du*$_{7}$*-šár-ra* also occurs (see Tallqvist 1938, 284; Schroeder 1915-16, 284-87; Lacerenza 1988-89, 120).

So far as geographical location is concerned Dushara is more certainly linked with Wādī Mūsā, the site of the modern town just outside Petra, since in some texts he is called "the god of Gaia" and el-Jī is an early alternative name of Wādī Mūsā. This confirms the strong local association (Starcky 1966, cols 987-8; Teixidor 1977, 91-2). Since Gaia means "valley" (cf. Hebrew גַיְא), we may have here further confirmation of the association of Dushara with wooded valleys rather than mountains (Zayadine forthcoming). Al-Kutbā too is associated with Gaia and this has provided grounds for an identification of that deity with Dushara (see below).

The texts linking Dushara with Gaia include one from ʿAvdat in the Negev dated A.D. 87/8, which refers to *dwšrʾ ʾlh gʾyʾ*, “Dushara, god of Gaia” (Negev 1963, 113-17: no. 10:3) and an inscription from al-Jawf dated A.D. 44/5 also referring to *dwšrʾ ʾlh gyʾʾ* (Savignac and Starcky 1957, 198: 2-3). There is also a *marzēḥā* inscription from Petra dedicated to *ʾlh (ʾl)gyʾ* (Milik 1972, 108-09 regarding *CIS* II, 423B). *ʾlgʾ* comes to be used elliptically in personal names as the theophoric element. So, for example, *ʿbdʾlgyʾ/ʿbdʾlgʾ*, the full meaning of which is “Servant of (the god of) el-Jī” (Khraysheh 1986, 127; Negev 1991a, nos 788, 790). The “god of Gaia” appears also in Greek form in a dedication inscription from Ṣammet el-Baradān in the Ḥawrān in a post-Nabataean context (Milik 1972, 428-32, pl. xv, 1):

> ᾿Ιλααλγῃ καὶ τῷ ἀνγέλῳ αὐτοῦ ᾿Ιδαρουμᾳ
>
> to Ilah-al-Gē and his angel Idaruma.

This appears to be a clear allusion to the god of Gaia with his angel, whose name is otherwise unattested, though it seems to be formed on the basis of the nominal phrase “The Raised Hand (of the God)”. It is possible that the hand on certain Nabataean coins is related to this (Patrich 1990a, 134).

Wādī Mūsā/el-Jī has its own important religious remains from the Nabataean period. Indeed some have argued that Gaia was the real settlement of the Petra area, with the main site of Petra fulfilling some kind of cultic or funerary role. The archaic Aṣlaḥ inscription from outside the eastern end of the entrance to Petra also contains a dedication to Dushara (*RES* §1432) and this may be because Wādī Mūsā was the focus of his cult in an earlier or primary settlement. The text in question, which appears to contain the earliest evidence of the divine name Dushara (Niehr 1998, 221), refers to *dwšrʾ ʾlh mnbtw*, “Dushara, god of Manbatu”. The name Manbatu is only found here and may be again the name of a specific place associated with Dushara’s cult, though we cannot exclude the possibility that it is a personal name and that this is an instance of the personal or family god (see Chapter V).

In this connection we must note that another divine name is associated with Gaia, that of al-Kutbā (below), and this creates the distinct possibility that al-Kutbā and Dushara are to be connected. If al-Kutbā were male they might even be identified with each other (a view espoused by Starcky), but we shall argue against this view of the deity's gender below.

Dushara is also called "god of Madrasa" in an inscription in a cult-chapel with a carved betyl (*CIS* II, 443):

> *dkyr whbw br qwmw*
> *wʾmh ʿlymtdʾs*
> *bṭb mn qdm*
> *dwšrʾ ʾlh mdrsʾ*
>
> Remembered be Wahbu bar Qūmu and his mother, PN, for good before Dushara, the god of Madrasa.

The dubieties of the second line need not concern us. Of specific interest is the title in the last line. Madrasa could hardly be a personal name and is more likely a place name. On the analogy of *ʾlh gʾyʾ*, it might refer to المدرس (*al-Madras*), the name by which this mountain south of the Petran Sīq is known to the present day. The area is one of clear religious significance with several religious inscriptions including another dedication to Dushara on behalf of Aretas IV dated A.D. 7/8 (*CIS* II, 442; Dijkstra 1995, 54-55).

We also know of at least one other temple of Dushara, at Daphne in Egypt (probably Tell ed-Defenneh south-west of Pelusium). This information comes from the second Shuqāfiyyeh inscription, dated 34 B.C. (Fiema and Jones 1990, revising Jones et al. 1988), found in a local museum:

> *dʾ rbʿtʾ dy ʿbd whbʾlh[y] br ... ldwšrʾ ʾlhʾ dy bdpnʾ mṣryt ...*
>
> This is the shrine which Wahballāhi son of ... made for Dushara the god who is in Daphne ...

Nabataean involvement in this region is almost certainly connected with trade (Jones et al. 1988, 53-54).

A further location with which Dushara would be specifically connected has been identified by Graf (1997, VII [original 1992]) as Ḥumaymah 60 km north of Aqaba. This is the ancient Auara/Hauarra and the name appears in a Nabataean inscription from a cult site (betyls, altar, etc.) at the nearby Jabal Qalkhah in the phrase, *ʿbd ʾlḥwr*, "Servant of al-Ḥawar". This would be elliptical for "Servant of (the God of) al-Ḥawar”, analogous to ellipsis in the personal name *ʿbdʾlgʾ*.

Yet another probable title of Dushara which tells us little about the nature of the deity is *mrʾ bytʾ* found beside a niche on the way up to the el-Khubthah “High Place” (Torrey, 1907; 1908; Dalman 1912, 96-98: no. 85; *RES* §§1088, 1436; see Lidzbarski 1915, 88-89):

> *ʾlh nṣyby ʾlʿzʿ wmrʾ bytʾ ʿbd whbʾlhy šyrʾ*
>
> These are the steles of al-ʿUzzā and Mārē Baytā (which) Wahballāhi the plasterer made.

This “Lord of the Temple” is probably Dushara. Any local god could be designated in such a way, as in the title of Allāh, رب هذا البيت, in the Quran (106:3: see Nöldeke 1909). The same title recurs in another inscription at Iram below two betyls: *dʾ ʾlʿzʾ wmr bytʾ dy ʿbd* ..., “This is al-ʿUzzā and Mār Baytā which PN made ...” (Savignac 1933, 413-15: no. 4; see Plate XV lower left). We find the title also in JS I, 213-16: no. 57, where a cult site in the Jabal Ithlib in Ḥegra appears to be dedicated to Dushara under this title (see also no. 58). In a fragmentary context it is also found on an inscription from Zizeh near Madeba (*RES* § 1284). Milik (1972, 175-76) sees the title as having cosmic implications: “Lord of Heaven and Earth”. The assumption is that the “house” in question is the temple, but Milik elsewhere (1958, 235) raised the possibility that it might refer to the royal household or family.

Thus we have the impenetrable situation of the main Nabataean god having a title, Dushara, rather than a specific name and being variously called “God of Gaia”, “God of Madrasa” and probably “Lord of the Temple”.

As we have noted, “Dushara” appears rather rarely as an element in theophoric personal names and in this context it is most likely that Dushara is referred to simply as *ʾlhʾ*, “the god” *par excellence* (Teixidor 1977, 83). In addition, we have noted that among the Nabataeans there is only one doubtful piece of evidence for the worship of Allāh, an inscription from Ruwāfah, probably of post-Nabataean date, in which the dedication is to *ʾlhʾ ʾlh* ..., “Ilāhā, god of ...” (Milik in Parr et al. 1971, 57-58). Allāh’s cult was reportedly introduced to Mecca from the north, but from Liḥyān, not from Nabataea (Winnett 1938, 246). Dushara also became the dynastic god of the kings of the Nabataeans, and in this context is called “Dushara, god of our lord (the king)", "god of Rabel", etc. But again the god's original name and nature are not revealed.

Zayadine (1989, 115) suggests that we should not look for a divine name behind the title Dushara, making an analogy with Baʿal, but in so far as we are dealing with a deity localized in the Petra area, it seems natural to look for an identification with earlier known deities of the region and an obvious candidate would be Edomite Qōs (for whom see Bartlett 1989, 200-07). The evidence for Qōs in Nabataea is discussed below, but it may be noted here that an argument has been made for identifying Qōs as the deity behind the name Dushara (Knauf 1986, 78; 1989, 59; 1985a 110-11; Niehr 1998, 221). However, while Dushara and Qōs were probably identified at Tannūr, no general association of the two can as yet be proved. And Qōs, like Dushara, is not well known.

A major issue, therefore, in Nabataean religion is the identification of the nature and characteristics of Dushara, the main god. When the Nabataeans worshipped Dushara, were they worshipping a god of the vegetation, of the sun, of the storm, of the nomadic life or what? That he was the source of blessing is implied by the legend *brkt dwšrʾ*, "Blessing of Dushara", on a coin of 16 B.C. of Obodas III (Schmitt-Korte 1990a, 110). One interpretation of Dushara's name (above) might link him with vegetation, but Dushara was, as we have noted, known to Ibn al-Kalbī as one of the pre-Islamic Arabian gods (Ibn al-Kalbī: trans. Faris 1952, 33; Fahd 1968, 71-5) and there is a hint that Dushara is astral, in line with much early Arabian religion, though this astral aspect is easily exaggerated (see Henninger 1981, 11).

Pointing in the planetary or astral direction is a Ḥegra text inside a tomb which appears to call him *prš lylyʾ mn ymmʾ*, "the one who separates night from day" (H 2:4). Unfortunately the epithet is not quite explicitly attached to Dushara who is not named in the inscription. There are interesting echoes of the phrase in Aramaic versions of Genesis both in the Peshitta and in the Targum, where we find:

לאפרשא בין יממא ובין ליליא (TgGen 1:14 [Onkelos]; see also 1:4, 18). Guidi (1910, 424) supposed that a Jewish dedicator was involved in the Ḥegra text. That there were Jews at Ḥegra is clear from one of the main tomb inscriptions written by a Jew (H 4) and the sundial made by or for a Jew (Jaussen and Savignac 1909, 242-43: 172bis; Healey 1989b), but since Dushara is named on the façade of the tomb by the persons who used our enigmatic phrase "Separator of Night from Day", it is unlikely to refer to any other deity. Teixidor

(1977, 85) detected connotations of a creator god like Yahweh. However, the creation aspect is determined by the context in Genesis 1. Dividing need not be creative, but might be simply astral. The title perhaps associates Dushara with the sun or the planets, Venus (Lidzbarski 1915, 268-69) or Mercury (Starcky 1966, cols 990-92), both of which separate the day and the night by appearing at dawn and sunset.

Starcky (1966, cols. 990-92; see also Teixidor 1977, 69-70, 88) thought that the divinity behind Dushara's various titles was Ruḍā, whose name means "benevolence" (Ibn al-Kalbī: رُضًّى). That this deity of ambiguous gender was particularly popular among the early northern Arabs is clear from "Thamudic" and "Safaitic" inscriptions (*rḍw*, *rḍy*) (Höfner 1965a, 463-64; Fahd 1968, 143-46; Littmann 1940, 106-07; 1943, 35: no. 160, 70: no. 286, 72: no. 293, etc., sometimes linked with Allāt: 35: no. 160, 91-92: no. 353; Knauf 1984, 353; Macdonald 1995, 761). The destruction of Ruḍā is described in Ibn al-Kalbī (trans. Faris 1952, 26):

> When in the early days of Islam, al-Mustawghir destroyed Ruḍa, he said: 'I marched against Ruḍa and burnt it down, and left it [her?] a heap of ashes, charred and black. I called upon ʿAbdullāh's aid for its [her?] destruction; verily it is one like ʿAbdullāh who would dare unlawful things to do.'

Starcky goes on to identify Dushara/Ruḍā with Mercury and the god Kutbā (though on the latter see below). The name Ruḍā may also be reflected in Herodotus' identification of ’Οροτάλ(τ) as the main god of the Arabs (*Histories* III, 8: ed. Rosén 1987: ὀνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον ’Οροτάλ: there are variants of the name in the manuscript tradition: ’Οροτάλτ), a form which can be explained as related to the name Ruḍā (Lidzbarski 1915, 90-93), and the form Ruldaiu which survives in Assyrian records.

There seems to be a major difficulty in this identification of Dushara with Ruḍā, the fact that Ruḍā does not appear in any Nabataean inscription of any period or even in Nabataean personal names. If Ruḍā were Dushara's real name, and given that the neighbouring Safaitic inscriptions show no reluctance to name the deity, we would surely find the name occurring occasionally.

There is also the problem of the gender of Ruḍā. Starcky and Krone understate the problem this creates in relation to an identification with Dushara. Even if we discount the rather slight iconographic evidence, a female figure alongside one of the Ruḍā inscriptions (*CIS* V, 4351, pl. xcviii bis; Dussaud 1955, 142-43), Ruḍā appears to be female in some epigraphic sources. Thus in "Safaitic" there are some cases where the deity's name is accompanied by a feminine verb-form (*CIS* V, 5011, and note discussion in relation to V, 8). In "Thamudic" the deity is called "lady" (possibly *st tmwd*) and is generally understood as female (van den Branden 1966², 112-14). In Ibn al-Kalbī the pronoun in relation to the destruction of Ruḍā is feminine (ed. Ahmed Zeki Pacha 1924², 30), though it looks as if Ruḍā is being conceived of as a temple as in Ibn Hishām (ed. Wüstenfeld 1859-60, 56). Lundin (1981) assembled a considerable body of evidence for the *goddess* Ruḍā and goes on to identify her with al-ʿUzzā who is widely assumed to be a manifestation of the planet Venus. He also thinks that the root involved is ʾRḌ and makes the very interesting comparison with Ugaritic Arṣay, one of the daughters of the god Baʿal — and of course al-ʿUzzā became one of the daughters of the high god Allāh.

Some scholars (Littmann 1940, 106-07; Winnett and Reed 1970, 75-76) entertain the possibility that both male and female versions of the deity existed in some contexts. Certainly a masculine version is attested in Palmyrene as Arṣu (see Dirven 1999, 88-96). There are parallels to such male/female pairings in ʿAzizu/ʿUzzā, Aktab/Kutbā (but see below), and more remotely ʿAthtar/ʿAthtart. Dushara might be put into connection with the masculine Palmyrene version of the deity, but again it is to be noted that Arṣu does not appear at all in Nabataean sources.

The substance of Starcky's argument, identifying Dushara with the planet Venus, widely regarded as masculine in the Ancient Near East, or alternatively with Mercury, need not be affected by these uncertainties. Whether this identification is really correct remains, however, uncertain, though the title "He who separates day from night" does point to the astral aspect.

Another text, much later in date (A.D. 267), calls Dushara *mry ʿlmʾ*, "Lord of the World" (JS I, 172-76, no. 17:7; cf. Healey and Smith 1989). Again it is not explicit that the god is Dushara. The original editors identify the god referred to as Dushara, but Teixidor (1977, 84-5) thinks the title refers to Baalshamin. Such titles betoken a generalizing trend which in certain contexts might be interpreted as monotheistic in tendency. It is difficult to be sure of this and in any case less easily supported in the Nabataean period before A.D. 106. There is, however, considerable evidence in the non-Nabataean

Semitic paganism of this period for such a tendency, especially at Palmyra and in South Arabia. At Palmyra we may note especially the worship of the Anonymous God, often called "Blessed-Be-His-Name-Forever", identified by some scholars with Baalshamin or a spiritualized version of him or with the sun-god Yarḥibol (Drijvers 1976, 15; Teixidor 1977, 122-30). In the past this was often ascribed to Jewish influence (a view now out of favour).

The monotheizing cult of the Merciful One (*rḥmnn*) also became a prominent feature of the latest phase of South Arabian religion. Again this new faith is usually accounted as a sign of Judaeo-Christian influence and there is no doubt that Judaism and Christianity had both became important in pre-Islamic South Arabia. However, it is not difficult to imagine the South Arabian epithet arising from traditional pagan usage, since the worship of the Merciful One (*rḥmn*) was widespread in Syria in the first centuries A.D. in a non-Christian and non-Jewish context under Mesopotamian cultural influence (Healey 1998).

So far as details of the cult of Dushara are concerned, we have little specific evidence. The *Suda*, a lexicographical compilation of the tenth century A.D., includes an entry on Dushara, identifying him with Aʿra, and refers to his cult as centred on a black stone (Adler 1931, 713, partly following Patrich 1990a, 51):

> Θεὺς ’Ἄρης: τουτέστι θεὸς ’Ἄρης, ἐν Πέτρᾳ τῆς Ἀραβίας. σέβεται δὲ θεὸς ’Ἄρης παρ’ αὐτοῖς· τόνδε γὰρ μάλιστα τιμῶσι. τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμα λίθος ἐστὶ μέλας, τετράγωνος, ἀτύπωτος, ὕψος ποδῶν τεσσάρων, εὖρος δύο· ἀνάκειται δὲ ἐπὶ βάσεως χρυσηλάτου. τούτῳ θύουσι καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῶν ἱερείων προχέουσι· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἡ σπονδή. ὁ δὲ οἶκος ἅπας ἐστὶ πολύχρυσος, καὶ ἀναθήματα πολλά.
>
> Theus-Ares: this is the god Ares in Petra of Arabia. The god Ares is worshipped among them, for they honour him especially. The image is a black stone, square, unshaped, four feet high, two wide. It is placed on a gold-plated base. To this they sacrifice and pour out the blood of sacrificial victims. This is for them the libation. The whole building is rich in gold and there are many dedications.

We cannot assume that this late source preserves authentic detail, though it clearly confirms the aniconic character of some aspects of Nabataean religion which is reflected in the worship of the ubiquitous stone-carved blocks lacking, for the most part, figurative treatment (Cook 1940, 907-20). And one aspect of what the *Suda* says is confirmed by the Nabataean inscriptions themselves, the fact that

Dushara's *mwtbʾ*, "throne, pedestal", was of special importance. We find *dwšrʾ wmwtbh*, "Dushara and his throne", as a divine pair in lists of deities occurring in tomb inscriptions. In the Turkmāniyyeh tomb inscription the tomb and its associated installations are sacred to *dwšrʾ ʾlh mrʾnʾ wmwtbh ḥryšʾ wʾlhyʾ klhm*, "Dushara the god of our lord (the king) and his sacred throne and all the gods" (*CIS* II, 350:3-4; Milik 1959). The significance of *mwtbʾ* and *ḥryšʾ* have been much disputed (see Healey 1993, 156-58). There is no need to repeat the argument here, but we may note the preference in *DNWSI* (s.v.) for our own view that *ḥryšʾ* must be a masculine adjective describing *mwtbʾ*. A word order of common noun followed by the proper name would be virtually impossible, so that *ḥryšʾ* cannot be the *name* of the *mwtbʾ* (against Starcky 1966, col. 992; Zayadine 1990a, 39; Gawlikowski 1990, 2668). The latter is most likely to be Dushara's "throne", the base on which his betyl stood (rather than "his spouse" [the adjective *ḥryšʾ* would then be in the wrong gender]).

It is reasonable to assume that Dushara was originally worshipped in betylic form, but the fact that he was represented also figuratively is suggested by the marble hand from the *adyton* of the Qaṣr el-Bint temple at Petra, assuming that this was dedicated to Dushara as high god (Zeus Hypsistos). There are also possible terracotta figurines of Dushara (Niehr 1998, 221-22).

Dushara's Assimilation to Non-Nabataean Deities

In the absence of clear direct (1st century Nabataean) clues to the essential character of Dushara, a possible line of investigation is provided by the mostly later identifications of Dushara with various other deities: with the god of Bosra, the god of Adraa and, under Greek and Roman influence in certain areas, with Dionysos and Zeus. He was also later identified with Helios, though this is usually relegated to a secondary stage of development under Greco-Roman influence or denied altogether (Sourdel 1952, 65-68; Dussaud 1955, 58 n.5; Starcky 1966, col. 992). This relegation is at least questionable.

Dushara and Aʿra, the God of Bosra

There is clear evidence of the identification of Dushara with Aʿra, the local god or betyl of Bosra, and the identification may be connected with a shift of the Nabataean administrative capital to Bosra (Starcky 1966, cols 988-90). The evidence is found over a wide area, from the Ḥawrān to Ḥegra, both before and after the Roman annexation. The wide distribution argues for this not being a purely local phenomenon.

A Ḥegra inscription (JS I, 204-06: no. 39) dated A.D. 39/40 does not name Dushara, but he is clearly in the background:

> *dnh msgdʾ dy ʿbd škwḥw br twrʾ lʾʿrʾ dy bbṣrʾ ʾlh rbʾl byrḥ nysn šnt ḥdh lmlkw mlkʾ*
>
> This stele Shakūḥu bar Tūrā made for Aʿra who is in Bosra, god of Rabel; in the month of Nisan, the first year of king Maliku.

This makes a firm connection between Aʿra of Bosra and king Rabel, to such an extent that the use of the briefer title of Dushara, *ʾlh rbʾl* (as in *CIS* II, 218; Milik 1958, 231; Starcky 1985, 181), actually implies an allusion to Aʿra (Dijkstra 1995, 310-14). *RES* §83, from Imtan in the Ḥawrān and dated A.D. 93, reads:

> *dnh msgdʾ dy qrb mnʿt br gdyw ldwšrʾ wʾʿrʾ ʾlh mrʾnʾ dy bbṣrʾ*
>
> This stele Munʿat bar Gadiyu dedicated to Dushara-Aʿra, god of our lord, (god) who is in Bosra.

The epithet *ʾlh mrʾnʾ* again refers to the king and the close association between Dushara and the royal family (see below).

RES § 676, inscribed on a basalt block found in Bosra and dated A.D. 148, has:

> *[dnh] msgdʾ dy qrb [y]mlk br mškw ldwšrʾ ʾʿrʾ*
>
> This is the stele Yamlik bar Mashiku dedicated to Dushara-Aʿra.

Possibly related is a bilingual altar inscription from Umm el-Jimāl published by Littmann (1914, 34-35: no. 38; 1909, 383-86: no. V):

> *msgdʾ dy ʿbd mškw br ʿwydʾ ldwšrʾ*
> Μασεχος Αουειδανου Δουσαρει Αρρα
>
> This is the stele Mashiku bar ʿAwīdā made for Dushara (Greek Dushara/Aʿra)

The Greek form of the divine name is Αρρα(ς) (Sourdel 1952, 60) and later this Greek form of the name led to identification with Ares.

To these evidences we may add a coin of Bosra of the reign of Commodus (end of the 2nd century A.D.) which depicts Dushara in human form with Dionysian iconography (flowing hair etc.) and the legend Βοστρηνων Δουσαρης (Hill 1922, xxvi, pl. xlix:13), though the depiction of Dushara as a betyl (or three betyls) did not cease and later coins retain this iconography (Patrich 1990a, 71-74). The legends specify Dushara and it can be reasonably supposed that this identifies him with the local god.

Also indicating a clear link between Dushara, Aᶜra and Bosra are the *Actia Dousaria*, celebrations in honour of Dushara celebrated at Bosra, possibly quadrennially, in the 3rd century A.D. and also evidenced on coins (Dussaud 1905, 179; Sartre 1985, 156-58). Whether this event has an earlier history is unclear. Actian games originally commemorated the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. and it is possible that they were instituted by Aretas IV to please the Romans, or there may have been an earlier Dushara-Aᶜra festival which was reshaped in the third century.

As we have seen the *Suda* identifies Dushara with Aᶜra (Adler 1931, 713; Patrich 1990a, 51): Θεὺς Ἄρης: τουτέστι θεὸς Ἄρης, "Theus-Ares: this is the god Ares." Some have taken the reference to the blood-libations in the later part of this text (quoted earlier) as a clue to the etymology of the name Aᶜra, explaining it as related (as an *afᶜal* form) to the Arabic root ǴRY, which they connect with "dyeing" (Teixidor 1977, 85-86) or "anointing" (Starcky 1966, cols 988-90; Zayadine 1989, 115). الَغَرِيُّ is the name of an idol attested in classical Arabic sources and *al-Ǵariyyān* (الَغَرِيَّان) were two idols at Ḥīrah or Kufa which were daubed with the blood of sacrificial animals (Wellhausen 1897^{2}, 105-06; Littmann 1909, 385-86; 1914, 34-35; Lammens 1928, 167; Lane, 2254; Ibn Hishām ed. Wüstenfeld 1859-60, 401; trans Guillaume 1955, 736). This is, however, far from certain and even identifying the root of the Nabataean form is difficult (ᶜṢR and ᶜḌR being theoretically possible, with subsequent inner-Aramaic shifts and dissimilation). Lidzbarski (1915, 93) linked *ʾᶜrʾ* with *ʾrṣw*.

Finally we may note that coins also associate Dushara with Adraa (modern Derᶜā): Δουσαρης Θεος Αδραηνων, "Dusares the God of the people of Adraa" (Starcky 1966, col. 990, referring to coins dated A.D. 174 and 177; Hill 1922, xxiii-xxiv, pls. iii: 5, xlix: 12; Patrich 1990a, 70-71). The coins depict an oval stone sitting on a *podium* or *mwtbʾ* (on which see Chapter VI and the niche from the Petra Sīq on Plate XV lower right). That there was a special connection in the later period between Adraa and Petra is clear from the inscriptions in the Sīq made by pilgrims from the city (see Chapter III).

Dushara and Dionysos

Although it appears that the traditional religion of the Nabataean Arabs tended to be aniconic, it is clear that Dushara came to be identified in areas of Greco-Roman contact with Dionysos (Sourdel 1952, 63-64; Starcky 1966, col. 990). This is certainly one of the ways that Dushara was understood in later tradition. The fifth-century A.D. lexicographer Hesychius (ed. Latte 1953, 475) has an entry on:

> Δουσάρην· τὸν Διόνυσον. Ναβαταῖοι, ὥς φησι ’Ισίδωρος
>
> Dusares: Dionysos. (Among the) Nabataeans, as Isidore says.

The link between Dushara and Dionysos, supported by the Bosran coin referred to earlier, may be reflected in the iconography of Tannūr. This is advocated by Glueck (1965, e.g. 313). The same connection may lie behind the association of Dushara with Suweidah/Dionysias in the Ḥawrān. The whole area around Suweidah is traditionally famous for its grape production and Dionysos became popular. Sourdel (1952, 63-64) identifies figures from Sīᶜ as Dushara-Dionysos, though doubt may be cast on these identifications (Starcky 1966, col. 990). There may even be an indirect association of Dushara with Mithras as a result of Dushara's association with Dionysos (Cumont 1918).

Is there evidence of this association with Dionysos in the earlier period? It may be that certain figurative representations of the pre-provincial Nabataean era, such as a medallion above an aniconic stele from Petra (Plate IVb), are Dionysian figures of Dushara, but we cannot be certain. Hammond (1968) interpreted the figure as female, though Zayadine (1975, 336-37) interprets it as Dushara. A somewhat similar Dushara figure may be represented by one of the Petra terracottas (Parlasca et al. 1997, 128 and fig. 142). There is also a relief from the *temenos* of the Qaṣr el-Bint temple which has been interpreted as representing Dushara-Dionysos (Mittmann et al. 1987, 222-23: no. 209; Zayadine 1989, 116) and, of course, wine-drinking ritual is implied in the *triclinium/marzēḥā* rituals (see Chapter VI).

This evidence does not, therefore, prove more than that Dushara was apt to be connected with Dionysos and most of the evidence is of late date and northerly provenance. It certainly cannot be taken to imply that Dushara in his normal Nabataean context had the same characteristics as Dionysos, whose association with viticulture would in any case make this improbable. Herodotus (III, 8), however, mentioning Arab worship of Dionysos and Urania, was referring to Dushara and Allāt according to Sourdel (1952, 62).

Dushara and Zeus

Given the prominence of Zeus, it is not surprising that in some contexts Dushara, as main god, is connected with Zeus (Starcky 1966, col. 990; Teixidor 1977, 82-85). This is clear from the bilingual inscription of Syllaeus from Miletus (Rehm and Kawerau 1914, 263-65: no. 165; the Nabataean is fragmentary and irrelevant here), in which the following is the Greek text:

> Συλλ]αῖος, ἀδελφὸς βασιλ[έως, ὑπὲρ βασιλέως ’Οβόδα]
> ἀνέθηκεν Διὶ Δου[σάρηι Σωτῆρι
>
> Syllaeus, brother of the king, on behalf of king Obodas, dedicated to Zeus Dusares Soter.

A similar inscription of 9 B.C. from Delos, a marble block, again a bilingual, has a dedication [Δ]ιὶ Δου[σάρει] (Bruneau 1970, 244-45; Roussel and Launey 1937, 292: no. 2:5: ID 2315).

This connection with Zeus is also reflected in iconography, though of course iconographic evidence is often ambiguous. Knauf (1986, 78) notes Dushara-Zeus-Hadad at Tannūr. But this connection is clearly secondary and tells us nothing about the original character of Dushara. It may none the less be very important, as is the veneration of Zeus-Dushara in the Qaṣr el-Bint temple in Petra, perhaps paired with Aphrodite (Zayadine 1990c, 157), suggested by a Greek inscription from that temple referring to (Ζεὺ)ς ὕψ(ιστος) (Zayadine 1985, 245). Strabo (16.1.11) has the Arabians (Nabataeans?) worshipping Zeus and Dionysos.

It may be noted incidentally that there are other inscriptions from the West indicating the presence of the cult of Dushara. Most notable is a series of inscriptions from Pozzuoli near Naples. These include an important rededication of a religious building (*mḥrmtʾ*), and possibly a *temenos* enclosure (*ḥgrʾ*?) and altar (*ḥmnʾ*), which Tram Tan Tinh (1972, 130-31) located on an island off Pozzuoli (*CIS* II, 158; Lacerenza 1988-89, rejecting the island location). The inscription is dated A.D. 5 and refers to an original foundation in 51 B.C. Although it does not mention a deity, it is clear from associated finds that the *mḥrmtʾ* was Dushara's. The associated finds include an altar and stele bases inscribed DVSARI SACRVM (Tram Tan Tinh 1972, 144-47; Lacerenza 1994) and more importantly a marble plaque bearing a Nabataean inscription, probably dated A.D. 11, recording an offering of two camels to Dushara (*CIS* II, 157). There is doubt as to whether these were live camels for sacrifice or models of clay or other material. The latter seems much more likely (against Tram Tan Tinh 1972, 143-44).

Dushara and the Sun (Helios)

While associations of Dushara with Dionysos and Zeus appear to be secondary, more significant is a series of small pieces of evidence pointing towards a connection with the sun-deity.

One of the most explicit is found in a Greek inscription from Suweidah in which Dushara is described as ἀνίκητος, "unconquered", an epithet which is, of course, characteristic of the sun deity Ἥλιος or *Sol invictus*. The inscription was erected by a priest of Dushara (Waddington 1968, no. 2312):

> . . . . ἱερεὺς Δο]υσάρεος θε[οῦ
> . . . . ἀνικήτου [ἀνέστη]σεν
>
> ... priest of the god Dusares ... unconquered, he set up ...

It is unfortunately difficult to be precise about the dating of this inscription. However, there is another Greek inscription, from Milḥ eṣ-Ṣarār near Bosra, which also mentions a priest of Dushara, and is dated to A. D. 164 (Waddington 1968, no. 2023; Littmann et al. 1921, 326-67: no. 706):

> Νάγος Χαίρου ἱερεὺς θεοῦ Δουσάρεος ἐπόησε τὸν βωμὸν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἔτει νθ´
>
> Nagos Chairou priest of the god Dusares made this altar at his own expense in the year 59.

The Suweidah inscription is probably of a similar date. Drijvers (1986, 671) links the ἀνίκητος inscription with a less clear legend, θεός ἀνίκητος, on a coin of Elagabalus from Bosra (A.D. 221/22), which might also point in a solar direction.

It is probable, therefore, that Dushara was perceived, at least by some, as a sun god, but the association would probably again remain no more than secondary were it not for the fact that one of our much earlier sources appears to confirm it. This is an important passage in Strabo referring to Nabataean religion (16.4.26; trans. adapted from Jones 1930, 368-69):

> ἥλιον τιμῶσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος ἱδρυσάμενοι βωμόν, σπένδοντες ἐν αὐτῷ καθ’ ἡμέραν καὶ λιβανωτίζοντες.
>
> They worship the sun, building an altar on the top of the house, and pouring libations on it daily and burning frankincense.

This almost certainly refers to Dushara worship rather than some sort of ancestral cult: it can hardly be doubted that Strabo claims to be telling us about the Nabataeans’ main cult. Many temples had stairs allowing access to the roof and this may be what is being alluded to.

Also of early date, though inevitably surrounded with uncertainties, is a relief from the Qaṣr el-Bint interpreted as representing a sun-god (Freyberger and Joukowsky 1997, 77; Hübner and Weber 1997, 119 and pl. 130a).

Epiphanius of Salamis (c.315-403) is less direct evidence, but in the *Panarion* (51, 22, 11) he mentions the Nabataean cult of Dushara in the context of virgin births. Dushara’s (re-)birth of a virgin sun-goddess was, it is claimed, celebrated at the winter solstice (trans. Williams 1994, 51; Mordtmann 1876; Greek text: ed. Holl 1922, 286-87):

> ... καὶ ’Αραβικῇ διαλέκτῳ ἐξυμνοῦσι τὴν παρθένον, καλοῦντες αὐτὴν ’Αραβιστὶ Χααμοῦ τουτέστιν Κόρην εἴτ’ οὖν παρθένον καὶ τὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς γεγεννημένον Δουσάρην...
>
> ...they praise the virgin with hymns in the Arab language and call her Chaamu – that is, Core, or virgin – in Arabic. And the child who is born of her they call Dusares...

He states that this cult took place in Petra, Elusa and Alexandria. The implication of the Epiphanius passage is that a cult of Dushara took place similar to other cults he describes in preceding sections. The main comparison is with the cult of the Coreum in Alexandria. This involved an all-night vigil at the shrine and a torch-lit procession with the image of the deity. There, from the Core is born Αἰών. Epiphanius is, however, more concerned with the cult of the mother of Dushara (whose Nabataean identity we do not know), than of Dushara himself.

The “virgin” Chaamu is thought to have a Semitic word behind it.

Traditionally a link has been sought with Arabic *kāʿib* and *Kaʿbah* (through the ambiguity of the root, which can refer to pubescent females and also to cubic shape: Mordtmann 1876). Gawlikowski (1990, 2665) sees a reference to a cubic Nabataean temple (the Qaṣr el-Bint). In support of this is the fact that the Kaʿbah was associated with "the virgin goddess" in pre-Islamic Mecca (Fahd 1968, 171-72; Winnett 1940), though it may be noted that the Qaṣr el-Bint had already been destroyed by earthquake by Epiphanius' time (so Zayadine forthcoming). More plausible is the suggestion of Milik (1982, 262; Zayadine 1986a, 247) that the underlying word is *ǵalmū* and hence Aramaic *ʿalmah*, "young woman", and if the Epiphanius text tells us anything it may be that Dushara had a mother who was important in the traditional cult. This may have been Allāt, who, as will be seen, may have been regarded as the mother of the gods.

Returning to Dushara himself, much evidence, therefore, points towards Dushara's having had, at least secondarily, a distinctively solar character (Turcan 1996, 187). But does it have to be regarded as secondary?

The view of Sourdel (1952, 53, 65-680) that Dushara is not solar was rightly challenged by Petersmann (1989), who points out that the worship of the sun was widespread before the coming of the Romans, while for the Greeks in earlier times the sun was not terribly important. The rootedness of Semitic sun-worship in the area is clear, with the Sumerian and Babylonian god Utu/Shamash, the Ugaritic goddess Shapshu, the mostly female South Arabian sun-deities (Shams, Ḏt-Ḥmym *et al.*: note especially Ryckmans 1987, 107-10), the Aramaean and Phoenician Shamash *et al.*, the Semitic sun-gods of the Greco-Roman Near East (sun-related cults at Hatra, Palmyra, Harran and Emesa: see Seyrig 1971; Tubach 1986).

It may be noted that the sun-cults of the Greco-Roman Near East had their own monotheistic tendency, indicated among other things by evidence of aniconism, and this appears to suggest again (though the argument is by no means conclusive) that Dushara was following the same trajectory. Nabataean aniconism is discussed elsewhere in this volume (Chapter VI and VII), but here it is worth noting that the sun-cult and aniconism are associated, since Lucian of Samosata tells us in the *Dea Syra* §34 that the temple in Hierapolis was full of images, but that Helios and Selene were not represented by statues. The throne of Helios was empty (ed. and trans. Attridge and Oden 1976, 44-47; ed. Macleod 1980):

> ... θρόνος Ἠελίου, αὐτοῦ δὲ ἕδος οὐκ ἔνι · μούνου δὲ Ἠελίου καὶ Σεληναίης ξόανα οὐ δεικνύουσιν
>
> ... the throne of Helios, but his statue is not on it. For only of Helios and Selene do they not display images.

The reason given is that they are in any case visible. And the Emesan sun-god was aniconic (Mettinger 1995, 85-86).

The fragmentary evidence listed above is insufficient to warrant a firm conclusion that Dushara was originally a sun-god (as stated by Ryckmans 1951^2, 23), but sun-gods were commonplace in the ancient and later Middle East and there is no intrinsic improbability in such a suggestion. Hopefully further epigraphic finds will throw more light on this issue.

As for Petersmann's claim (1989: 411-12) that the Arabian ancestors of the Nabataeans imported their Arabian sun-deity, Ḏt-Ḥmym, and merged her with the native male deity, it depends much on the assumption that immigrants from the South permeated every region of the Greco-Roman Near East. The strong evidence for the worship of the sun-god at Hatra, in clear continuity with Mesopotamian tradition, tells against the need to posit external influence of this kind. It remains true, however, as noted by Teixidor (1977, 49), that the spread of the sun cult owed much to the Arabs.

Other aspects of Dushara in relation to other gods and goddesses will be explored in subsequent sections of this chapter. Here just two other issues may be mentioned:

Firstly, it is not entirely clear which goddess is to be regarded as Dushara's spouse. We will show below that al-ʿUzzā is the likeliest candidate at Petra, but she may have been simply a manifestation of the other great goddess invoked by the Nabataeans, Allāt. In the Safaitic inscriptions Dushara mostly appears with the latter. But there is no absolute necessity for the main male and female deities to be spouses. Allāt may be better regarded as the *mother* of Dushara (*CIS* II, 185).

Secondly we must note here Dushara's role as the dynastic god of the Nabataean royal family and the state tribal patron (Knauf 1990b, 175; Starcky 1966, cols 987-98). It is a distinctive feature of Dushara's role in Nabataean religion that he is identified as the god of several of the Nabataean kings and was probably regarded as the god particularly connected with the dynasty (Dijkstra 1995, 311). According to Wenning and Merklein (1997, 107) he *becomes* the Nabataean god as part of Rabel II's *renovatio*. The texts in question are discussed in detail below, though it is not accepted by all that Dushara's was a state cult (Macdonald 1991, 112-14).

Albrecht Alt in his classic treatment of the Old Testament "god of the fathers" (1966) cited the Nabataean habit of referring to the god of an individual and the dynastic god may be regarded as a special case within that general paradigm. Thus whereas in general piety one might find reference to an individual's god (e.g. "the god of Qaṣiyu"), in the national context this was translated into "the god of our lord (the king)". The implication of the raising of the notion to the national level is important, since it gives Dushara a role intrinsic to the fabric of the Nabataean polity.

Conclusions

After reviewing most of the Nabataean evidence of Dushara, one further contentious issue remains unresolved, whether he should be regarded as some kind of nomadic import. Macdonald (1991, 112-14) has pointed out the evidence against this supposition. If his name is essentially related to a local topographic feature (the Sharā mountain range), he cannot be regarded as an import, even if, from the structure of his name, we can reasonably assume an Arab factor in his coming to prominence. Although we have seen some doubts about the meaning of the name, equally we have seen Dushara being associated with a number of other locales in the Petra region, notably Gaia.

The temptation to look to a remote Arabian origin is encouraged by a superficial reading of sources like Ibn al-Kalbī. He tells us that:

> The banu-al-Ḥārith ibn-Yashkur ibn-Mubashshir of the Azd [tribe] had an idol called dhu-al-Shara. One of the Ghaṭārif, referring to it, said: 'We would descend upon the region surrounding dhu-al-Shara, and our mighty army would, then, smite the foe.' (Ibn al-Kalbī, trans. Faris 1952, 33).

We have earlier quoted also the story of al-Ṭufayl b. ʿAmr's wife washing in the sacred waters of Dushara's Dawsite sanctuary (Guillaume 1955, 176). But we must set alongside these precious snippets the fact that Dushara could easily be an *import* into Arabia rather than an export to Nabataea. Early Islamic tradition strongly supports the view that idolatrous cults were imported from Syria (see Hubal below) and Ryckmans (1951^2, 17) regarded Dushara as of Aramaean origin.

This is not to abandon the view that the Nabataeans were settled or settling Arabians. There is other evidence for that (linguistic, religious, social, onomastic), but we may have to exclude Dushara from the inventory.

The Nabataean Goddess: Allāt, al-ᶜUzzā

When we turn to the goddesses venerated by the Nabataeans we have even more difficulty in reaching firm identifications and explanations and the uncertainties are reflected in the scholarly literature. In effect it is much easier to identify iconographic elements which have been imported and added to the iconographic repertoire of the Nabataean goddess (or goddesses) than it is to be clear on her (or their) actual identity and characteristics.

For a long time the goddess of Khirbet et-Tannūr has been understood as a version of Atargatis. The difficulty with this, or at least the difficulty with regarding the main goddess at Tannūr or Petra as Atargatis, lies in the fact that Atargatis is a foreign deity to Nabataea and is explicitly so treated in the sole Nabataean inscription in which she appears (see separate discussion below). This is not, however, to exclude the possibility of the attachment of Atargatis themes to the Nabataean goddess. But the Nabataean Goddess was not the Syrian Goddess (as Lucian calls Atargatis of Membīj).

Likewise there is clear evidence of Isis themes being attached to the Nabataean Goddess, but again in the one Nabataean inscription which probably mentions Isis there is an implication that the goddess needed identification and explanation to the reader of the inscription (in one of the remoter locations at Petra) and this makes it clear that whereas some devotees of the Nabataean Goddess may have made connections with Isis, the Nabataean Goddess was not simply Isis (see separate discussion below).

That Isis and Atargatis elements should infect Nabataean religion is obviously a function of the fact that both goddesses enjoyed very widespread popularity in the Roman East: it would be surprising not to find traces of Atargatis and Isis in Nabataea.

But who was the Nabataean Goddess? There are very few candidates in the inscriptional evidence, though it is highly likely that she is mentioned there. We can immediately set aside the goddess Manōtu (dealt with separately below). She is of regional significance in northern Arabia but is hardly mentioned outside that sphere. (The same is true of the male deities Hubal and Qaysha, who is in some way associated with Manōtu). The only remaining names available to us are Allāt and al-ᶜUzzā.

Allāt and al-ᶜUzzā are both associated with an Arabian background, by which I mean that they are clearly best attested in Arabia and the tradition of their cult resurfaced in the Islamic tradition. It is completely clear from the Islamic accounts that the two goddesses were distinct. Al-ᶜUzzā was regarded as junior (i.e. second-rank and of late date) and her cult was mainly associated with the Quraysh and the Ḥurāḍ valley north of Mecca, while Allāt was mainly associated with the Thaqīf and Ṭāʾif.

A distinction between the two must, therefore, be our starting point in the consideration of the goddesses in the more northerly context of Petra and the Ḥawrān. However, as we will see, the two goddesses are identified with Greco-Roman deities in such a way that the distinction between them comes to be blurred and our overall view is that they are to be regarded as different manifestations of the same divine reality.

Allāt

A strongly argued case has been put forward recently by Hammond (1990) for the view that Allāt (identified with Aphrodite) was the goddess of the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra. If this were the case, then it would almost automatically follow that she was the main goddess of the city. We would also then assume that she was Dushara's (main) partner, as she is in Safaitic inscriptions. The evidence is not, however, unambiguous.

The major difficulty with treating Allāt as the main goddess of Petra is the fact that she is named in no Petran inscription, though she does appear in inscriptions from the Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ area (JS II, 189-90: no. 212, 190: no. 213); she was also the most popular goddess in the Ḥawrān (especially at Ṣalkhad, where Baalshamin was also worshipped: above) and, secondarily, at Iram. Krone (1992, 131-45; see also Sourdel 1952, 69-74; Gawlikowski 1990, 2666-68) gathers the Nabataean evidence in the context of her wider discussion of al-Lāt (for the name see below).

A commemorative inscription from Ṣalkhad in the Ḥawrān refers to a temple rebuilt by a certain family in the 17th year of king Malichus (A.D. 56: the date is not entirely certain):

> *lʾlt ʾlhthm dy bslḥd*
>
> for Allāt their goddess, who is in Ṣalkhad (modern spelling) (*CIS* II, 182, with corrected interpretation of the word *ʿm* by Clermont-Ganneau 1898c, 372-74).

The fact that a temple was built or rebuilt by these individuals "for their goddess" may imply that she was not normally at home in Ṣalkhad. Starcky suggests she was an Arab import of Nabataean or Safaitic origin. She is well known in Safaitic inscriptions, sometimes linked with Ruḍā (Littmann 1943, 35: no. 160, 91-92: no. 353).

Another inscription of A.D. 95 from Ṣalkhad refers to *ʾlt wwgrh*, "Allāt and her betyl (?)":

> *dnh bytʾ dy bnh ʿwtʾlh br qṣyw br ʾdynt br ʿwtʾ(lh)*
> *br ʾklbw br rwḥw br qṣyw lʾlt wwgrh ...*
>
> This is the temple which PN (re-)built for Allāt and her betyl (?) ... (Milik 1958, 227-31: no. 1: see *CIS* II, 183 and 184).

The temple in question is the same one as that of *CIS* II, 182 (above), maintained by the same family, a member of which may be mentioned in another inscription of a "priest of Allāt" (*kmr ʾlt*) at Ḥebrān dated A.D. 47 (*CIS* II, 170; Milik 1958, 228-29). The term *wgrʾ* is not completely clear in meaning. Milik (1958, 230-31) favours "bétyl", but the word is used in Ḥegra for a tomb (H 11:2; 12:7). Krone (1992, 132; see Patrich 1990a, 57-58) suggests "Höhle, Grotte", a meaning which might correspond with the configuration of the ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh grotto.

A third inscription from Ṣalkhad, on a *msgdʾ*, bears a dedication *lʾlt rbt ʾlʾtr* or, more probably, *lʾlt dʾt ʾlʾtr*, "Allāt, mistress of the place (= the Ṣalkhad sanctuary)" or "of al-Atar" (Littmann 1914, 22-23: no. 24; *RES* § 2052; Milik 1958, 229-30). The *ʾl* is probably the Arabic definite article rather than the word for "tribe". Another possibility is to interpret *ʾatar* as an Iranian loan meaning "fire altar", a *ḥmnʾ* (Starcky 1982, 196).

Given the paucity of clear evidence on Allāt, a *msgdʾ* bearing an inscription referring to Allāt as *ʾm ʾlhyʾ dy mʾrnʾ rbʾl*, "mother of the gods of our lord Rabel" (*CIS* II, 185) would be particularly important. Unfortunately the reading is not certain (Winnett 1940, 118; Clermont-Ganneau 1898c, 374 n. 3). If correct it would hint at a certain hierarchy or familial relation between the gods, with Allāt having the status of an elder or even the progenitor of the divine family. It might also suggest the pairing of Dushara and Allāt is not one of husband and wife (Wenning and Merklein 1997, 106), but of mother and son (cf. Epiphanius above).

Since Allāt is identified with Athena in the Ḥawrān (Sourdel 1952, 69; Starcky 1981), an identification explicit also in a list of Syrian deities from late Roman Cordoba (Hiller von Gaertringen et al. 1923-24; Cumont 1924), note may be made also of the numerous inscriptions with dedications to that deity (Krone 1992, 133-34). Particular note may be made of a Greek inscription now in the Suweidah Museum, which refers to ’Αθηνᾶς Ἄρρων καὶ πηγῶν, “Athena of Raḥa and of the Springs”, as the Tyche of a village and its water supply (Dunand 1930, 274: n. 4; Sourdel 1952, 70) and a temple at Shaʿrah dedicated to her as τῆς μεγάλης θέας (Waddington 1968, no. 2521). She also figures in many theophoric personal names from the Ḥawrān (Krone 1992, 134).

Despite the fact that Allāt does not appear in any inscription from Bosra itself she is depicted on Bosran coins as Tyche of Bosra (Sourdel 1952, 72; Kindler 1983, 57-58; Krone 1992, 135) and connected with that city in an inscription beside a niche at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh in Wādī Ramm (Savignac 1933, 411-12: no. 2), *dʾ ʾlt ʾlhtʾ d(y) bbṣrʾ*, “This is Allāt, the goddess who is in Bosra ...”, which appears to distance her from Ramm: although she came to be quite at home there, she is still perceived as an incomer. It may be noted that she is here represented by an elaborate niche, crescent and headed stele, comparable with a figure carved near the Dīwān at Ḥegra (Savignac 1934, 582-85). The same ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh inscription refers to *ʿlymy ʾpkl*, “servants of the *afkal*”, officials of some sort: the elevation of Bosra and the development of ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh and Iram seem to have taken place under Rabel II. The badly damaged inscription no. 1 of ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh (Savignac 1933, 407-11: no. 1), mentioning Rabel II and members of the royal family, may refer to the dedication of a statue, but possibly indicates an approximate foundation date for the whole sanctuary: c. A.D. 82-84.

In fact both the Iram temple studied by Savignac and Horsfield (1935) and the other installations at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh appear to have been dedicated to Allāt: she is called “the great goddess who is in Iram” (*ʾlhtʾ rbtʾ dy bʾrm*) (Savignac and Horsfield 1935, 265-8: no. 1:2: originally dated A.D. 147, now regarded as of 1st century date: Zayadine and Farès-Drappeau 1998). We have already noted the betyl at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh, similar to another at Ḥegra, which represents Allāt: *dʾ ʾlt ʾlhtʾ d(y) bbṣrʾ*, "This is Allāt the goddess who is in Bosra ..." (Savignac 1933, 411-12: no. 2; Jaussen and Savignac 1909, 410-13). She was "*the* Goddess" *par excellence* (so in one of the Greek texts: Savignac 1933: no. 2). Numerous inscriptions from the site and the nearby Umm el-Quṣēr refer to her, mostly inscriptions of the "Remembered be ..." type (Healey 1996, especially 178-81). In Chapter III we noted the following examples:

> *dkyr ḥyn br ʿbdʾlhy br*
> *ʾbnʿtmw qdm ʾltw*
> *ʾlhtʾ dy bʾrm ʿd ʿl(m)*
> Remembered be Ḥayyan son of .... son of ... before Allatu the goddess who is in Iram, for ever (Savignac 1932, 593-4: no. 3).
>
> *dkrt ʾlt ʿydw*
> *bnyʾ br ʾbšlm bṭb*
> May Allāt remember ʿAydu the builder, son of Abshalam, for good (Savignac 1933, 417: no. 7).

Most of these inscriptions appear to have been written by or for the builders who were active on the site (see Savignac 1933, nos. 5, 7, 8,13, 14 and his comments on pp. 421-22). In no. 5 we find again the *ʿlymy mrʾnʾ*, referring to the servants of the king (see *ʿlymy ʾpkl* above). In one of the inscriptions the priest of Allāt (*khn ʾltw ʾlhtʾ*) is mentioned (Savignac 1932, 591-93: no. 2).

The Iram temple was a very early foundation associated with the tribe of ʿĀd (*ʾl ʿd*), as we know from a Thamudic inscription dated A.D. 32 or 36 (Zayadine and Farès-Drappeau 1998). The association of ʿĀd with Iram is also known quite independently from the Quran:

> Do you not know how your Lord dealt with (the tribe of) ʿĀd, Iram with its columns (peaks?), the like of which has not been created in the (whole) land? (89:5-8; Gibb 1962, 276; Glidden 1939).

We know of one other specific location in addition to Ṣalkhad, Bosra and Iram to which the goddess was attached. In a Ḥegra tomb inscription Allāt of ʿAmnad appears in a list of deities (H 16:4). The location (it could be the name of a temple) is unknown. But we can from this inscription see for the first time clearly a local version of Allāt taking a place in some sort of "pantheon" (in which Dushara and Manōtu otherwise play the most prominent roles). The suspicion must be, however, that this is a local Ḥijāzi form of Allāt and it does not counterbalance the glaring absence of Allāt from the Petra inscriptions. Otherwise in Nabataean north Arabia there are also two Nabataean inscriptions from near al-ʿUlā calling upon the goddess to remember someone (JS II, 189-90: no. 212 and 190: no. 213). Note again the possible Allāt figure, analogous to the one at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh, beside the Ḥegra Dīwān (Jaussen and Savignac 1909, 410-13: figs. 201, 203). Krone (1992, 139) would add betyl-representations of Allāt in niches, with or without Dushara, but these are all uncertain as to identification.

Allāt was popular over a wide area of northern Arabia and Syria (Ryckmans 1951^2, 15; Henninger 1954, 99-100; Krone 1992; Drijvers 1982, 69-70), including Liḥyān (Caskel 1953, no. 104; JS II no 277, mentioning an *afkal* of hers), Palmyra (Drijvers 1976, 19-20; Teixidor 1979, 53-62), Edessa, etc. (Höfner 1965a, 422-24). In the Safaitic and Hismaic inscriptions she is apparently worshipped as Lat (*lt*, with a possible variant *ʾlt* and in personal names *h-ʾlt*: Macdonald 1995, 761; Macdonald and King 1999, 437). She is sometimes regarded as having a Syrian origin (Winnett 1940, 122). So far as Allāt in the Arabian context is concerned, little needs to be said here (see Fahd 1968, 111-20; Winnett 1940). Her sanctuary (*ḥimā*) was at Ṭāʾif and she was worshipped as a stone by the Thaqīf (Ibn al-Kalbī: trans. Faris 1952, 14-15). There may also have been an Allāt temple at Taymāʾ (Winnett and Reed 1970, 167-71).

It may be noted, however, that there is considerable confusion over the form of the name of Allāt in Arabic, partly arising from the form given by Herodotus, who explicitly identifies Alilat with Aphrodite:

> καλέουσι ... Ἀράβιοι δὲ Ἀλιλάτ ... (I, 131)
>
> ὀνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον Ὀροτάλτ, τὴν δὲ Οὐρανίην Ἀλιλάτ (III, 8: ed. Rosén 1987).

The name-form Alilat seems to assume an original *ʾal-ʾilat*, apparently a feminine form of the word for "deity" with a prefixed definite article. The form Allāt might have developed by syncope of the longer form (Starcky 1982, 195). The etymology of the name in the Arabian context is discussed fully by Fahd (1968, 111-20), who inclines to the view that the name is based on a genuine Arabic common noun derived from the root LTT (compare the Safaitic above). It is certainly treated as such in later Arabic tradition. Thus the name is in Arabic *Al-Lāt* (with the final /t/ one of the root letters rather than a feminine ending). The Alilat of Herodotus is the subject of variant readings including: ʼΑλιλάτ / ʼΆλιττα (I, 131 and III, 3) and may be to be explained in some other way: Zayadine (1981b, 113) suggests a connection with the root *ʿly*, "go up, high", which may in turn be reflected in Herodotus' reference to Urania.

Krone (1992, 43-63) discusses all of this in detail and provides a relatively simple solution to the problem based on Ullendorff's work on the development of the definite article (Ullendorff 1977). According to this view Herodotus gives us accurate information, but it has to be interpreted in the light of the development of the article and the development would have been as follows: *hal-ilat* (rendered into Greek as ʼΑλιλάτ) > *hallat* > *allat* (Nabataean *ʾlt* and *ʾltw*), which was then reinterpreted by the Arab authors, often by analogy with Allāh, as *al-Lāt.* Poetic forms like Lāt would thus be based on a misunderstanding.

There is no doubt that *ʾlt/ʾltw* is a proper divine name in Nabataean Aramaic: the Nabataean for "goddess" is *ʾlht(ʾ).* It may also be noted that the initial *alif* is sometimes elided in compounds (personal names like *whblt*: see the same phenomenon in early Syriac), but this is not to be taken to indicate that the name was perceived as Lāt: in Nabataean the name was Allāt or Allatu. This alternation between the two forms of the name: *ʾlt* / *ʾltw* seems to be random (see Savignac 1933, nos. 3, 5, 7-11). This phenomenon needs explanation on the level of phonology and orthography (and is not unique), but it does not imply any difference on the level of religion.

The absence of Allāt from the epigraphy of Petra must be regarded as significant, though it is a possibility that she is represented as Athena in a figure from the Qaṣr el-Bint *temenos* gate (Zayadine 1989, 119, pl. 6). Clearly al-ʿUzzā was more important at Petra, even if there is some slight trace of Allāt. This requires explanation. Starcky's suggestion (1966, col. 1003; 1981, 120; see also Niehr 1998, 221) that al-ʿUzzā was originally a title of Allāt is quite plausible. We never find the two side by side in Nabataean as we do in early Islamic tradition. By a gradual process the two became separate deities. Al-ʿUzzā took on all the characteristics related to Venus/Aphrodite as a planetary deity. Allāt came to be identified with Athena and took on a military aspect, absorbing iconographically outside Nabataea some of the characteristics of Atargatis (Sourdel 1952, 72; Zayadine 1989, 119). She became a "militant protectress and life-giving mother goddess" (Drijvers 1978, 350).

Krone (1992, 144-45) suggests that the absence of Allāt from Petra may reflect traditional tribal affinities, with al-ʿUzzā as the main goddess of the Nabataeans themselves and Allāt venerated in the Safaitic *Kulturkreis*. Her popularity in the Ḥawrān would not be ascribed to Nabataean influence, but should be regarded as part of a wider phenomenon of the spread of "Arab" religion.

Winnett (1940, 124-27: see also Cooke 1903, 222) thought that Allāt was a moon deity. He notes the crescent symbol associated with Allāt at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh (above) and the fact that in a Lihyanite inscription (JS II, 506: Lih no. 277) the title *ʾfkl lt* has the name of the south Arabian moon-god Wadd written above it. Dussaud (1955, 142) and Ryckmans (1934, I, 3) favoured the Venus aspect, while others have seen Allāt as a sun-goddess (e.g. Buhl 1936; Fahd 1968, 117-19). In Palmyra Allāt's temple appears to have had a special role as a place of asylum and an inscription enjoins the avoidance of the shedding of blood within its precinct, which also displayed the famous Palmyrene figure of a lion or lioness with a gazelle sitting peacefully between its paws (Drijvers 1982; Gawlikowski 1982, 301).

Anticipating our conclusion at the end of the section on al-ʿUzzā, it is probable that al-ʿUzzā, "the Mightiest", is treated in the Nabataean context as an epithet of Allāt, even if they came to be regarded as distinct in the pre-Islamic Meccan tradition. We are, therefore, speaking of a single goddess, who was worshipped as al-ʿUzzā at Petra and as Allāt at Iram and in the Ḥawrān. Though there is very little direct evidence, she was probably the "Nabataean Goddess" *par excellence*, the partner of Dushara in a kind of dyotheistic pairing, though she may have been regarded as his mother, and possibly the mother of all the gods, rather than his spouse.

Al-ʿUzzā

Al-ʿUzzā had great prominence among the Nabataeans (see Sourdel 1952, 74; Lindner 1988; Gawlikowski 1990, 2665-66) and is named in a number of Nabataean inscriptions, her name being spelled in variant forms as *ʾlʿzʾ* and *ʾlʿzyʾ*. The name thus preserves a north Arabian form with the prefixed definite article found also in Lihyanite (*hnʿzy/ʿzy*: Caskel 1953, 82: no. 13; 88: no. 25), while the spellings with *-y-* may partly be reflected in the Arabic orthography: العزّى (*al-ʿuzzā*). In Arabic the name is understood to mean "the mightiest one", a title related to the (masculine) divine name ʿAzīzu found in Palmyra (and reflected in Greek Azizos).

Al-ʿUzzā appears in several inscriptions at Petra. One was discovered beside a niche on the way up to the Khubthah "High Place" in 1906 and published by Torrey (1907, 1908; *RES* §§1088, 1436; Dalman 1912, 96-98; no. 85; see Lidzbarski 1915, 88-89):

> *ʾlh nṣyby ʾlʿzʿ wmrʾ bytʾ*
> *ʿbd whbʾlhy šyrʾ*
>
> These are the steles of al-ʿUzzā and Mārē Baytā (which) Wahballāhi the plasterer/caravan-leader made.

The "Lord of the Temple" is probably Dushara at Petra, but the reference could be to al-ʿUzzā's spouse in her own temple elsewhere. Wenning and Merklein (1997, 108) conclude that al-ʿUzzā had a temple at el-Khubthah. Another inscription is in Wādī es-Siyyagh each side of a small niche containing a betyl:

> *(š)lm hnʾt ʿlym ʾlʿzʾ ʾlhtʾ*
>
> Peace to Haniʾat, slave of the goddess al-ʿUzzā. (Milik and Starcky 1975, 124-26, pl. xlvi)

Another, in Sidd el-Maʿājin, mentions her (Milik and Starcky 1975, 126) and Zayadine (1981b, 114) implies a connection with the fact that a nearby inscription refers to "Dushara and all the gods" (*RES* § 1401). It is a widely held view that al-ʿUzzā was the spouse of Dushara in the Petran cult (Milik and Starcky 1975, 126; Zayadine 1979, 197; 1981b). There are, however, some grounds for caution on this:

A Nabataean inscription from Bosra may specifically connect the goddess with *that* city:

> *[ty]mw br bdrw lʾlʿzʾ ʾlht bṣ[rʾ]*
>
> Taymu bar Badru, for al-ʿUzza, goddess of Bosra (Littmann 1914, 57-58: no. 70; *RES* § 2091).

The reading is, however, uncertain and Starcky (1966, 1003) prefers to read *nṣrw* as a personal name rather than *bṣrʾ*. The phrase "goddess of Bosra" is, in any case, rather strange. "The goddess who is in Bosra" would be more normal. Besides, the fact that she would be named "goddess of Bosra" would not exclude her having been also regarded as the "goddess of Petra" or the Nabataean Goddess *par excellence*. Her cult might have been transferred to Bosra at a late date as the result of political changes.

The complexity of the Nabataean goddesses is underlined by the appearance of al-ʿUzzā also in inscriptions from ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh/Iram, where a major temple was dedicated to Allāt. There are betyls with facial markings and inscriptions. One pair of betyls links her with al-Kutbā of Gaia just outside Petra:

> *ʾlktbʾ dy bgyʾ // ʾlʿzʾ*
>
> Al-Kutbāʾ who is in Gaia; al-ʿUzzā (Savignac 1934, 574-75: no. 17, with reading correction by Strugnell 1959, 29-31; see Plate XV upper).

Al-ʿUzzā is on the left, with her name below (Savignac 1934, 586-87). In fact the star-eyed eye-idols standardly represent al-ʿUzzā (once Atargatis) (Patrich 1990a, 82-86) and the same motif may be reflected in jewellery (Patrich 1984). Zayadine (conference paper forthcoming) identifies the two betyls as Hermes and Aphrodite. There is also a pendant from ʿAvdat interpreted as a form of Aphrodite Anadyomene by Patrich (1984, 42-46) who notes the similarity of the figure to the *danseuse* associated with Ruḍā (*CIS* V, 4351, pl. xcviii bis; Dussaud 1955, 142-43).

Another inscription from the site (Plate XV lower left), below two betyls, links her with "the Lord of the Temple" (probably Dushara): *dʾ ʾlʿzʾ wmr bytʾ*, "This is al-ʿUzzā and Mār Baytā which PN made ..." (see above; Savignac 1933, 413-15: no. 4). One of the betyls with the markings of a face (Savignac 1934, 587-89) is slightly larger and must represent al-ʿUzzā since she is mentioned first in the inscription. Also probably representing her is the uninscribed betyl on a free-standing stone block in the Petra Sīq (Zayadine 1979, 194-97; Niehr 1998, 221; see Plate Va).

Since Iram was mainly the province of Allāt, the question arises of the relation between the two goddesses: it seems most likely that they were identified with each other.

Circumstantial evidence points also to al-ʿUzzā's popularity in Sinai. Two Sinai texts (*CIS* II, 611, 1236) refer to a "priest of al-ʿUzzā", though the orthography is a little odd: *khn ʿzyʾ*. There is also a personal name from Sinai, *ʿbdʾlʿzy*, based on the divine name (*CIS* II, 946). Winnett (1940, 122) thought that her cult originated in Sinai and cites in support the late evidence of St Jerome's *Life of Hilarion*, which refers to the Saracen worship of Venus in Sinai and a specific festival and temple (*PL* xxiii, 41, §§ 26-27; see Chapter III on Sinai). It is even possible that the name Elusa is derived from that of the goddess (Hawting 1999, 141).

Last but not least in the Nabataean context is the bilingual Greek and Nabataean dedication from Cos dated to the 18th year of Aretas IV. This identifies al-ʿUzzā with Aphrodite:

> *lʿzʾ ʾlhtʾ* // θεᾶι ʾΑφροδίτῃ (Levi della Vida 1938, with Rosenthal 1939, 91 n.4)

This connection with Aphrodite, discussed especially by Zayadine (1981b and 1984), might be brought into association with the fact that there was a temple of Aphrodite in Petra in the second century A.D., as indicated in one of the Naḥal Ḥever documents (Lewis 1989, no. 12:2, 5-6). The Cos inscription itself may be taken to point in this direction: a Nabataean far from home making a dedication to an important Nabataean goddess. But he may have been principally making his dedication to Aphrodite and only secondarily giving an *interpretatio nabataea* to this act, without implying anything about how al-ʿUzzā was regarded in Petra. As we have seen, al-ʿUzzā is attested epigraphically at Petra, but only in rather obscure places in the city and not at all prominently.

There is also the remarkable fact that in the numerous Ḥegra inscriptions which list deities active in curses and in receiving fines, al-ʿUzzā is nowhere to be found: in northern Arabia above all she might have been expected. In Safaitic she is only found (as *hʿzy*) in theophoric personal names (Macdonald 1995, 761). She does, however, appear in Lihyanite (perhaps also in JS II, 365-66: Lih no. 36) and reportedly in an inscription from Ruwāfah: *ʾpkl ʿzyʾ*, "afkal-priest of (al-)ʿUzzā" (Starcky 1966, col. 1004). The same divine name appears in the form of ʿUzzayan in Sabaic (Winnett 1940, 114-15; *CIS* IV, 558:4; 559:1).

That al-ʿUzzā was both in the Arabian and in the northern context a planetary deity representing the morning star, Venus, is very clear from a wide range of sources (Winnett 1940. 122; Caskel 1953, 45; Henninger 1954, 101-06; Höfner 1965a, 475; Zayadine 1981b, 1984; Drijvers 1980, 152; Krone 1992, 492-520; note doubts raised by Hawting 1999, 142). According to Henninger (1981, 11) al-ʿUzzā *and* Allāt are both aspects of Venus. There are indeed many evidences of the cult of Aphrodite in the region, including some evidence in Byzantine Greek polemical texts that a relief figure of Aphrodite was located in the Kaʿbah at Mecca (Zayadine 1981b, 114; 1989, 121; Montet 1906, 153: ll.20-27; Fahd 1968, 170-71). John Damascene and a Byzantine abjuration of Islam refer to Arab Venus cults under the names Χαβαρ (John's *De Haeresibus*: *PG* xciv, 764 A/B, 769 B [ed.

Kotter 1981, 60 and 64]; Montet 1906, 154: ll.22-23), while Bartholomew of Edessa has Χαμαρ (*PG* civ, 1385 C). Both John (764) and the abjuration text are very explicit also in identifying the Semitic root (KBR) and referring to the Arab worship of Aphrodite. John's text has

> Οὕτοι μὲν οὖν εἰδωλολατρήσαντες καὶ προσκυνήσαντες τῷ ἑωσφόρῳ ἄστρῳ, καὶ τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ, ἥν δὴ καὶ Χαβὰρ τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἐπωνόμασαν γλώσσῃ, ὅπερ σημαίνει μεγάλη.
>
> These people used to be idol-worshippers and worshipped the Morning Star and Aphrodite, whom they called Chabar in their own language, meaning 'Great'.

The abjuration text: ἣν κατὰ τὴν Ἀραβων γλῶσσαν χαβὰρ ὀνομάζουσι, τούτεστι μεγάλην. In a slightly different context Germanus refers to χοβαρ as a stone idol (*PG* xcviii, 168 A-D; trans. Mendham 1849, 231-32). It is possible that these are reflexes of *al-Kubrā*, "the Greatest Goddess" (Rotter 1993, 126-28; on Byzantine polemics against Islam see Khoury 1972, referring to these passages on pp. 240-41, 275-79, 341-44, and Hoyland 1997, 105-06, 485-87).

According to early Islamic tradition and specifically Ibn al-Kalbī al-ᶜUzzā was distinct from Allāt and worshipped by the Quraysh more than other goddesses, but her shrine was at Nakhlat ash-Shāmiyyah east of Mecca, which had acacia trees and a *ǵabǵab* to collect the blood of sacrifices (Wellhausen 1897^{2}, 103; trans. Faris 1952, 16-23). It was looked after by the Sulaym (the Shalamu of the Nabataean inscriptions?). There was also a sanctuary at Buss called the Kaᶜbah of Ghaṭafān (Starcky, 1966, cols. 1004-05). Lundin (1981) identifies her with Ruḍā.

Tradition tells us that Muḥammad, before his acceptance of Islam, had sacrificed a white sheep to her and there is a vivid description, worth quoting extensively, of the destruction of her sanctuary by Khālid ibn al-Walid in Ibn al-Kalbī:

> When the Prophet captured Mecca, he dispatched Khālid ibn-al-Walīd saying, 'Go to the valley of Nakhlah; there you will find three trees. Cut down the first one.' Khālid went and cut it down. On his return to report, the Prophet asked him saying, 'Have you seen anything there?' Khālid replied and said, 'No.' The Prophet ordered him to return and cut down the second tree. He went and cut it down. On his return to report the Prophet asked him a second time, 'Have you seen anything there?' Khālid answered, 'No.' Thereupon the Prophet

> ordered him to go back and cut down the third tree. When Khālid arrived on the scene he found an Abyssinian woman with dishevelled hair and her hands placed on her shoulder[s], gnashing and grating her teeth. Behind her stood Dubayyah al-Sulami who was then the custodian of al-ᶜUzzā. When Dubayyah saw Khālid approaching, he said: 'O thou al-ᶜUzzā! Remove thy veil and tuck up thy sleeves; Summon up thy strength and deal Khālid an unmistakable blow. For unless thou killest him this very day, Thou shalt be doomed to ignominy and shame.'
>
> Thereupon Khālid replied: 'O al-ᶜUzzā! May thou be blasphemed, not exalted! Verily I see that God hath abased thee.'
>
> Turning to the woman, he dealt her a blow which severed her head in twain, and lo, she crumbled into ashes. He then cut down the tree and killed Dubayyah the custodian, after which he returned to the Prophet and reported to him his exploit. Thereupon the Prophet said, 'That was al-ᶜUzza. But she is no more. The Arabs shall have none after her. Verily she shall never be worshipped again.'

For al-ᶜUzzā's prominence in the pre-Islamic period we also have the testimony of Isaac of Antioch in the middle of the fifth century A.D. in his second *Homily on the Conquest of Beth Ḥur*, whose defeat by Arab tribes is connected with its idolatrous cults, including that of ᶜUzzī or ᶜUzzay (ܥܘܙܝ: ed. Bickell 1873, 210: 101; Drijvers 1980, 158).

Zayadine (1981b) is probably right in regarding al-ᶜUzzā as the main goddess of Petra (Zayadine 1989, 123; Lindner 1988) and probably identified with Aphrodite there and elsewhere. His further linking of her with Isis is less certain (below). Starcky (1982, 196) identified the Winged Lions temple as hers, though there is no certainty on this and Hammond has favoured Atargatis and Allāt at different times (Hammond 1978, 86; 1981, 140; 1990). We are inclined to see al-ᶜUzzā and Allāt as essentially identified by the Nabataeans, with the al-ᶜUzzā manifestation of this goddess the slightly more prominent one at Petra, while Allāt was favoured particularly at Iram and in the Ḥawrān. We cannot, however, be sure of this identification of the two on present evidence.

CHAPTER FIVE

OTHER DEITIES WORSHIPPED BY THE NABATAEANS

Kūtbā and al-Kutbā

The elaboration of the Nabataean evidence on the deity al-Kutbā, whose gender has been disputed, we owe to J. Strugnell (1959; cf. Starcky 1966, cols 993-96). The name *ʾlktbʾ* had not before been clearly recognized until Strugnell made the comparison with the Lihyanite divine names *hnktby* and *hnʾktb* (JS II, 366-67: Lih no. 37:3; 402-03: no. 62:5, etc.; in 394-95: Lih no. 55: *ʾfkl hktby*) and was able to point to other occurrences (below). We follow his order of presentation, beginning with a corrected reading of text no. 17 from ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh (originally Savignac 1934, 574-75), inscribed below two betyls (Plate XV upper):

> *ʾlktbʾ dy bgyʾ // ʾlʿzʾ*
>
> Al-Kutbā who is in Gaia // al-ʿUzzā

This deity would, therefore, have had a temple at Gaia/el-Jī just outside Petra, as well as being venerated at Iram.

The interpretation as "Al-Kutbā who is (called) in Gaia al-ʿUzzā" (Colombo 1995) would settle the issue of the gender of the deity, but it is does not take account of the fact that there are *two* betyls (two deities) or the repeated use of the formula "DN who is in such and such a place" not followed by another divine name. Nor would it be easy to see why Gaia had been picked on, given the general popularity of al-ʿUzzā (Colombo 1995, 186).

While the first assumption with regard to the two betyls might be that one represented a male deity and the other a female (al-ʿUzzā), it is to be noted that the two betyls could both be female. Both have a form of decoration which is similar in every detail and Patrich (1990b, 187) states that the eye-idols specifically represent al-ʿUzzā. If this is true, the two betyls must represent al-ʿUzzā and another goddess of the al-ʿUzzā type. Al-Kutbā would then have to be female. As we will argue below, it is best to interpret both *ʾlʿzʾ* and *ʾlktbʾ* as female, but first we must examine the other evidence of al-Kutbā:

The probable personal name *tymlktbʾ* appears in JS I Nab 142 (corrected reading). We may immediately supplement this with the occurrence of the same name, *tymʾlktbʾ*, several times at Petra, on a path from the Madras High Place (Milik and Starcky 1975, 116-19; note also Safaitic: Macdonald 1980, 188-89: no. 43). The name *ʿbdʾlktb* appears in a Nabataean inscription from Taymāʾ (Beyer and Livingstone 1987, 292).

The same deity appears in the (first) inscription from Tell esh-Shuqāfiyyeh in Egypt dated to the middle of the first century B.C. Note that Strugnell restored the word *ʾlhtʾ* at the end of line 2:

> *(dnh by)tʾ d(y bnh PN)*
> *(br ..)bw lʾlktbʾ ʾ(lhtʾ)*
> *(ʿl) ḥyy mrʾn ṣyw ʾpklʾ*
> *(wḥ)yy npšh wdy yhwh šm(h)*
> *(dk)yr qdmyh wbʾwytw*
> *bšlm ...*

> This is the temple which PN son of PN built for al-Kutbā the goddess for the life of our lord ṢYW the *afkal* and the life of himself. And may his name be remembered before her and in ʾWYTW in peace ... (Clermont-Ganneau 1924b; Littmann and Meredith 1954, 227-30; Starcky 1955, 155-56).

Strugnell's assumption that the deity was female was supported by the form of *qdmyh* in line 5 (a view still adhered to, with justification, by Niehr 1998, 222). Starcky (1955, 155), in arguing for a masculine interpretation of the divine name, notes the existence of such feminine-looking masculine suffix forms in Nabataean (Cantineau 1930, I, 54-55), though they are exceptional and mostly very late in date, while arguments from other branches of Aramaic such as Christian Palestinian Aramaic (Zayadine 1990b, 44) and Syriac (Littmann and Meredith 1954, 229) are unconvincing, since the normal Nabataean for "before him" would certainly be *qdmwhy*. More fundamental to the issue of gender, however, is the universal assumption (post Strugnell) that the name is based on a feminine Arabic elative as in classical Arabic like the name al-ʿUzzā (الاكبر masc.: الكبرى feminine). As we have noted, in support of the femininity of al-Kutbā is the depiction of her as a starry-eyed eye-idol at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh. This iconography is associated with al-ʿUzzā (and to a lesser extent Atargatis) (Patrich 1990a, 82-86).

There was in addition an altar dedicated *lʾlktbʾ*, "to al-Kutbā", and a sanctuary at Qaṣrāwet in Egypt, as we know from a brief inscription (*RES* §1487 with re-reading of Strugnell 1959, 35, with Starcky; for recent archaeological work see Oren 1982). Indeed it is possible that the otherwise unknown ʾWYTW in the previous inscription is in fact an ancient form of the name Qaṣrāwet. This might indicate that there was a well-known temple of al-Kutbā there.

Doubt was first cast on the gender of the deity by an inscription discovered later (after Strugnell wrote) from Petra from a circular triclinium (*stibadium*):

> *qdm kwtbʾ*
> *ʾlhʾ dnh*
>
> before Kūtbā this god (Milik and Teixidor 1961)

The rather strange demonstrative is taken by Milik to refer to a representation of the deity on the wall of the *triclinium*. The inscription is extremely fragmentary, the lines quoted being all that remains and originally in the middle of the inscription, so that it is by no means certain that Kūtbā is the deity referred to as "this god", but this is the natural assumption and it would clearly indicate a male deity, telling against the assumption that al-Kutbā is female. In turn this led to the questioning of Strugnell's view that we are dealing with a goddess and the attempts we have seen above to explain *qdmyh* as having a masculine suffix.

Are we forced to conclude with Starcky (1966, cols. 993-94; Zayadine 1984, 168; 1990, 43) that al-Kutbā was male? It seems to me that there are serious difficulties with such a conclusion. Firstly the name is spelled differently in the *stibadium* inscription: *kwtbʾ* versus *ʾlktbʾ*. Epigraphically it is clear that there is no *ʾal-* definite article. *kwtbʾ* is not a feminine superlative/elative as in classical Arabic (as assumed by Strugnell for *ʾlktbʾ*: explicit in Milik and Teixidor 1961, 24). It looks masculine and it is not surprising therefore to find the word *ʾlhʾ* associated with it. On the other hand there are problems with explaining al-Kutbā as masculine, since it must surely be an Arabic-type feminine elative. This problem is not solved by Milik and Teixidor (1961, 24) and given little attention by Zayadine (1990b, 37; 1990c, 154): the latter does draw attention to Arabic names like موسى, but this is of Hebrew origin and the parallel does not explain how *ʾlktbʾ* (putative Arabic الكتبى) could be other than a feminine.

If the *stibadium* inscription is correctly read, the fact that the forms *ʾlktbʾ* and *kwtbʾ* are so different forces us to regard them as distinct deities, perhaps male and female aspects of the same planetary deity, Mercury (see below). The male aspect came into Nabataean tradition as Kūtbā rather than al-Aktab (as in the *stibadium*), while Lihyanite *ha(n)kutbā* (written *h(n)ktby*) came into Nabataean as al-Kutbā.

A female *kwtby* (ܟܘܬܒܝ) is also attested in Syria and Mesopotamia in early and later Syriac sources as one of the deities worshipped especially by the Arab population (especially *Oration of Pseudo-Melito*, ed. Cureton 1855, 44 ll. 31-33; Milik and Teixidor 1961, 24-25; Drijvers 1980, 153-55), though not much weight can be placed on this evidence.

What then is the nature of this divine pairing? Strugnell, relating the divine name to the Lihyanite divine names *hktby/hnʾktb* (JS II, 366-67: Lih no. 37:3; 402-03: no. 62:5, etc.; in 394-95: Lih no. 55: *ʾfkl hktby*), regarded the deity as a scribal/messenger deity of the (male) Nabu/Thoth/Hermes/Mercury pattern (Caskel 1953, 45; Strugnell 1959, 35-36). There is no doubt of the popularity of Nabu in the Greco-Roman period (Drijvers 1980, 40-75; Milik and Teixidor 1961). Since there were temples of al-Kutbā in Egypt, Strugnell gives the comparison with Thoth prominence (noting also Egyptian influence in Lihyanite religion) and he comments on the association with al-ʿUzzā by comparison with the Mercury/Hermes-Aphrodite combination found, for example, in Arrian, where the island of Cataea in the Gulf is sacred to Hermes and Aphrodite (*Indica* 37). Zayadine (1990b, 39) interprets the two betyls at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh as Hermes and Aphrodite.

Further, Starcky (1966, cols 993-96; 1982, 196) and Zayadine (1984, 168), who take al-Kutbā to be male, suggest that the association of al-ʿUzzā with al-Kutbā in Wādī Ramm and the association of al-ʿUzzā with Mār Baytā (= Dushara) at Petra lead to the conclusion that Dushara and al-Kutbā were assimilated. (Zayadine 1990b, 38, 42, also makes comparison with Palmyrene Arṣu and Safaitic Ruḍā/Ruldaiu/Orotalt.) Both al-Kutbā and Dushara are stated by inscriptions to be located at Gaia and the fact that the second inscription from Tell esh-Shuqāfiyyeh is dedicated to Dushara when there was a temple of al-Kutbā in the area (Fiema and Jones 1990, revising Jones et al. 1988) may point in the same direction.

As we have seen, however, it is not certain that the divine pair in the Ramm inscription with the two betyls are male and female: two females are a possibility, and much of the evidence points towards the deity named al-Kutbā being female. This being so it is better to assume not that al-Kutbā and Dushara are identical, but that both had temples in Gaia.

Deities of Regional Importance

Baalshamin

The Syrian deity Baalshamin (*Baʿalšamīn*, "Lord of Heaven") has a long history reaching back to the second millennium B.C. The title later became the name of a specific deity (1000 B.C. +) (Niehr forthcoming). His origins lie in the great storm and fertility god Baʿlu of the Ugaritic texts. His specific name appears to be a title of the storm-god Hadad whose worship was widespread in Syria and Mesopotamia (Addu). In the Roman period he was especially popular as the most commonly venerated supreme god, frequently identified with Zeus (Sourdel 1952, 21-27). He came to be associated with agricultural fertility (like Baʿlu) (Teixidor 1977, 81). He was popular in Palmyra, Hatra and the Edessa region, where he was identified with the local deity Maralahe (Drijvers and Healey 1999, 80). Zangenberg (1970, 28) in fact argues that Baalshamin is a Palmyrene import into Nabataea, but there is no specific evidence for this: Baalshamin was popular over a wide area (Teixidor 1977, 30-40 and *passim*). He appears frequently in Safaitic inscriptions, having been borrowed by the groups who wrote them through contact with the sedentary populations of the Ḥawrān.

Within the Nabataean heartland, Baalshamin was really a foreign god (Teixidor 1977, 84; see also Gawlikowski 1990, 2670), but he *became* a Nabataean god by being borrowed from the traditional religious culture of the Ḥawrān, where he was particularly popular (Sourdel 1952, 19-31). He had a late 1st century B.C. temple dedicated to him at Sīʿ (Dentzer and Dentzer 1981; see Chapter III), which appears to have been a centre of pilgrimage (Littmann 1943, 90-91: no. 350; Dentzer 1986b, 405). Littmann (1905, 85-90: no. 1; 1914, 76-78: no. 100; see *CIS* II, 163; *RES* § 2023) published a major inscription from Sīʿ dedicated to Baalshamin (*ʿl bʿšmn*) and from the epistyle of the portico of his temple:

> *dkrwn ṭb lmlykt br ʾwšw br mʿyrw dy hw bnh ʿl bʿšmyn byrtʾ gwytʾ wbyrtʾ brytʾ wtyṭrʿ dʾ wmṭ[llth] ... šnt 280 ʿd šnt 300 (?311) ...*
>
> In pious remembrance of Malīkat son of Awsu son of Muʿayru, who built for Baalshamin the inner temple and the outer temple and this *theatron* and its covering ... (from) the year 280 until the year 300 (?311) ... (see also Chapter III).

There was also possibly some veneration of Dushara at the same site, though the evidence is not clear, and it is possible that the two gods were identified by the Nabataeans.

Also from the Ḥawrān, from Ṣalkhad (where Allāt was also worshipped), we have an altar, probably to be dated A.D. 64/65 (Starcky 1966, col. 916: correction of original reading of the year number as 33, which is impossible), dedicated *lbʿlšmn ʾlh mtnw* (Littmann 1914, 21-22: no. 23; *RES* § 2051):

> *dʾ msgdʾ dy ʿbd PN lbʿlšmn ʾlh mtnw bšnt 25 lmlk(w) mlkʾ*
>
> This is the altar which PN made for Baalshamin, god of *Mtnw*.

msgdʾ has a variety of meanings (see Chapter III). Littmann noted that *Mtnw* might be a place-name (?= Imtan nearby) or the name of a person or tribe (see the ancestral gods, below), though Baalshamin was also associated with the tribe of Qaṣiyu, as we know from another inscription from the area (Littmann 1914, 11-14: no. 11): *dnh ʿbd ʾl (q)ṣyw lʾlhhm bʿl(šmn)*, "the tribe of Qaṣiyu made this for their god Baalshamin".

From Bosra comes an inscription probably dated to the first century A.D. to the reign of one of the Nabataean kings and dedicated to Baalshamin:

> *dʾ msgdʾ dy ʿbd tymw br wldn lbʿšmn ʾlh šʿydw*
>
> This is the stele which PN made for Baalshamin, the god of Shuʿaydu (*CIS* II, 176)

At Iram, in an inscription dated to the reign of Rabel II, he is listed alongside Dushara-Aʿra of Bosra (Savignac 1934, 576-77: no. 19: link with Bosra discussed p. 577) and finally from Wādī Mūsā an inscription from the reign of Aretas IV is dedicated *lbʿšmyn ʾlh mnkw*, "to Baalshamin, the god of *mnkw*" (Khairy 1981, Milik's additional note, 25-26). These texts and the Ṣalkhad inscription clearly indicate the formal adoption of Baalshamin as an official Nabataean deity. This development may be linked with Rabel II's so-called *renovatio*, but the evidence points to a move to adopt Baalshamin even earlier. Allāt was also prominent at Ṣalkhad and Iram and it is possible that Allāt and Baalshamin were paired there. Also quite early is the Wādī Müsā inscription, dated to the reign of Aretas IV and the Malichus referred to must be Malichus I (against Dijkstra 1995, 56 n. 33), though there is the possibility that the inscription was erected by a Ḥawrānian visitor to Petra rather than by a native of the city.

In connection with this last text, Tarrier (1990), discussing a figure of a bearded god found in Wādī Mūsā, identified a major temple of Baalshamin in the centre of ancient Gaia and argues that Baalshamin was gradually spread southwards from his Syrian "home". He was also worshipped among the Safaitic peoples (Littmann 1943, index p. 344, e.g. no. 348, c. 20 times in Safaitic inscriptions in *CIS* V), the normal form *bʿls*^{1}*mn* being a loan from Aramaic (Macdonald 1995, 761). Prayers addressed to him include requests for peace, health, booty etc. (Niehr forthcoming). Zeus Hypsistos was worshipped in the Qaṣr el-Bint and this title might, as it would in a Palmyrene context, point to Baalshamin. Hence Zayadine (forthcoming) has argued that this temple was dedicated to Baalshamin as supreme god. But the fact that this temple was apparently dedicated to Zeus Hypsistos does not preclude dedication to Dushara. In general, since Baalshamin was a pre-eminent sky-god in Syria, one might have expected him to be identified with Dushara. The assimilation of Dushara to Dionysos, Helios and Zeus could easily lead to the linking of Dushara with Baalshamin. Both were heavenly deities. However, there is really little sign of this and in the fragments of a list of gods in a dedication at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh Dushara and Baalshamin are listed quite separately (Teixidor 1977, 83; Savignac 1934, 576-77: no. 19). Teixidor (1977, 84-85) cites the title *mrʾ ʿlmʾ* in an inscription from Ḥegra as referring to Baalshamin (as this title does at Palmyra) (JS I, 172-76: no. 17), but this is very late in date (mid third century A.D.).

Qōs

The worship of the old Edomite deity Qōs is attested mainly at Tannūr. Two inscriptions name him as the recipient of offerings. One is a bilingual from Bosra on a basalt sculpture of an eagle (Milik 1958, 235-41: no. 3):

> *mʿynw br zbdy ʿbd nšrʾ lqws* MOAINOC
>
> PN made (this) eagle for Qōs: Moainos.

The other, on a stone slab from Tannūr, is even more explicit (Savignac 1937, 408-09: no. 2; Milik 1958, 237-38):

> *(d)y ʿbd qsmlk*
> *lqs ʾlh*
> *ḥwrwʾ*
>
> (Stele) which Qōsmalik made for Qōs, the god of Ḥūrawā.

Since a third inscription has a dedication to *ḥwrwy*, "the Ḥūrawite", it is most likely that Ḥūrawā is a place-name, possibly the ancient name of Tannūr itself (so Milik 1958, 238) as noted earlier.

There is difficulty in establishing how Qōs was regarded by his worshippers at Tannūr. Glueck (1965, 86) thought the deity of Tannūr was Dushara in the form of Zeus-Hadad. Hammond (1990) claims that Qōs's consort there was Isis. Starcky was surely right when, reviewing Glueck's work (1968), he pointed out that only Qōs is represented in the inscriptions at Tannūr and he must be the main deity of the temple. We know that Qōs did undergo transformations after the collapse of the Edomite state, being equated, e.g., with Apollo by the Idumaeans (Teixidor 1977, 89-90). His lightning iconography associates him as god of storms with Hadad-Zeus and his partner was probably represented as the fish-goddess Derketo (Zayadine 1989, 118-19; Milik 1958, 238 n. 6).

The repeated suggestion that Qōs was connected with the Arabian lightning god Quzaḥ (Ryckmans 1951^{2}, 18; Höfner 1965a, 462) is not supported by any clear evidence apart from Josephus' reference to Idumaeans worshipping Κωζέ (*Antiquities* XV.253; *pace* Teixidor 1977, 89-90).

Hubal

The god Hubal (هبل), whose name is known in this form from early Arabic sources (see especially Fahd 1968: 95-103; Höfner 1965a, 447-48), was apparently known also to the Nabataeans, though a slight element of doubt must remain, since the Nabataean form, which appears with certainty in only one Nabataean inscription, is *hblw*. The final *-w* is typical of Nabataean divine and personal names (note *ʾlt*/*ʾltw*).

The Nabataean inscription in question, dated 1 B.C./A.D., is one from Ḥegra in the southern, Arabian, region of Nabataea. This geographical accident of discovery agrees with the other information we have on this deity, which is rather limited in theological detail, but very specific geographically. Ibn al-Kalbī and other Arabic sources tell us that Hubal was worshipped in the Kaʿbah at Mecca (trans. Faris 1952, 23-24, and see, for example, Rubin 1990, 103-04).

The Nabataean inscription (H 16:8) is funerary in character and Hubal's name appears with that of Dushara and Manōtu as the recipient of a substantial (though imprecisely understood) fine imposed on anyone who contravenes the restrictions on the use of the tomb stipulated earlier in the inscription. Since Hubal is mentioned only in this case, while fines to gods are several times mentioned in similar contexts, it cannot be supposed that there is any special connection between Hubal and tombs. There is no doubt about readings (despite Hawting 1999, 113 n. 1), but in the syntax there is a possible implication that Dushara and Hubalu are more closely related and that Manōtu is in a separate category:

> *pʾyty ʿmh ldwšrʾ whblw wlmnwtw šmdyn 5*
>
> ...(and) he will be liable to Dushara and Hubalu and to Manōtu in the sum of 5 *šamad*s...

Thus the preposition *l-* is not repeated before *hblw* and this might imply a pairing of Hubal with Dushara. Starcky is, of course, right to reject out of hand the notion that Hubal might be Dushara's spouse (1966, col. 998): both are certainly male.

There is another possible occurrence of the name of the deity in *CIS* II 158, the Nabataean inscription from Pozzuoli near Naples of A.D. 48: the reading is that of J. T. Milik, reported by Starcky (1966, col. 998). However, the most recent edition of that text by Lacerenza (1988-89: 123-25) does not contain this word.

What is, however, clear in the Pozzuoli inscription is the appearance at least once of a theophoric personal name probably constructed on the name of this deity. The name is *bnhbl* (without the final *-w* and therefore a more exact correspondent of the Arabic form), interpreted by Khraysheh (1986, 48) and Starcky (1966, col. 998) as "son of Hubal". An alternative might be to interpret the name as "Hubal has fashioned" (*CIS* and Euting 1885, 31; Cantineau 1932, II, 72, leaving the question open). However, the name Hubal appears once otherwise in a personal name, *brhbl*, in a dedicatory text dated 25 B.C. and published by Milik and Starcky (1975: 122: no. 5). This must be "Son of Hubal" and Milik and Starcky regard it as an Aramaic version of the name found in the Pozzuoli inscription. We might add that the name *bnhbl* appears also in the "Thamudic" of northern Arabia (Starcky 1966: col. 998, 999-1000; van den Branden 1950, 363; Ryckmans 1934-35: 71).

For light on the nature of the god Hubal we have to turn to the Islamic sources and above all to Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 821/22), who gives considerable detail (Arabic text ed. Ahmed Zeki Pacha 1924^2; trans. Faris 1952, 23-24):

> The Quraysh had also several idols in and around the Kaᶜbah. The greatest of these was Hubal. It was, as I was told, of red agate, in the form of a man with the right hand broken off. It came into the possession of the Quraysh in this condition, and they, therefore, made for it a hand of gold. The first to set it up [for worship] was Khuzaymah ibn Mudrikah ibn al-Yaʾs ibn Muḍar. Consequently it used to be called Khuzaymah's Hubal.
>
> It stood inside the Kaᶜbah. In front of it were seven divination arrows. On one of these arrows was written 'pure', and on another 'consociated alien'. Whenever the lineage of a new-born was doubted, they would offer a sacrifice to it [Hubal] and then shuffle the arrows and throw them. If the arrows showed the word 'pure', the child would be declared legitimate and the tribe would accept him. If, however, the arrows showed the words 'consociated alien', the child would be declared illegitimate and the tribe would reject him. The third arrow was for divination concerning the dead, while the fourth was for divination concerning marriage. The purpose of the three remaining arrows has not been explained. Whenever they disagreed about something, or purposed to embark upon a journey, or undertake some project, they would proceed to it [Hubal] and shuffle the divination arrows before it. Whatever the result they obtained they would follow and do accordingly.
>
> It was before [Hubal] that ᶜAbd-al-Muṭṭalib shuffled the divination arrows [in order to find out which of his ten children he should sacrifice in fulfilment of a vow he had sworn], and the arrows pointed to his son ᶜAbdullāh, the father of the Prophet. Hubal was also the same idol which abu-Sufyān ibn Ḥarb addressed when he emerged victorious after the battle of Uḥud, saying: 'Hubal, be thou exalted' (i.e. may thy religion triumph); To which the Prophet replied: 'Allāh is more exalted and more majestic'.

Elsewhere in the same work (Faris 1952: 19) it is reported that

> Zayd ibn ʿAmr ibn Nufayl, who, during the Jāhilīyah days, had turned to the worship of God and renounced that of al-ʿUzza and other idols, said: '.......Nor do I journey to Hubal and adore it, although it was our lord when I was young.'

Other Muslim authors add other details. Al-Azraqī (c. 900) informs us that ʿAmr ibn Luḥayy brought Hubal from Hīt in Mesopotamia and set it up inside the Kaʿbah. It was visited by people returning from journeys and they would shave their hair in Hubal's presence. It was made of agate or cornelian (a variety of chalcedony) with the gold hand and the arrows were cast on matters relating to marriage and virginity. Its (standard?) sacrifice was 100 camels and it had a custodian (see al-Azraqī ed. Wüstenfeld 1858, 31, 58, 72-74; Peters 1994: 24-25). We also learn of a special association between the god and the tribe of Kinānah which was closely related and allied to the Quraysh (see also Ibn Hishām/Ibn Isḥāq: trans. Guillaume 1955, 64, 66-67, 70).

Unclear in the tradition is the place of origin of the Hubal idol. Al-Azraqī says it came from Hīt in Mesopotamia (Wüstenfeld 1858, 31, 73), while Ibn al-Kalbī has by implication al-Balqāʾ in Bilād al-Shām (English ed. Faris 1952: 7; see also al-Shahrastānī, ed. Cureton 1846, 430-31) and Ibn Hishām (d.828/29 or 833/34) has Moab in the land of Balqāʾ (Ibn Hishām ed. Wüstenfeld 1859-60 I, 51; Ibn Kathīr, trans. Le Gassick, 1998, 42; Nöldeke 1909, 185 n. 3).

From these pieces of information it is clear enough that the statue of Hubal was of a male figure with a golden arm (apparently a replacement for a broken-off stone arm). He was closely associated with divination by means of arrows (belomancy) (see especially Fahd 1958). There was a traditional awareness of his having been imported from Syria or Transjordan or Mesopotamia and this partly explains why Hubal is not integrated, so far as we can tell, into the divine family of Allāh (an aniconic deity even in pre-Islamic Mecca) and the three "daughters of Allāh", Allāt, Manāt and al-ʿUzzā (whose status as daughters of Allāh was, of course, repudiated by orthodox Muslim traditionists).

Hubal has proved to be of special interest to scholars of pre-Islamic Arab religion, since J. Wellhausen (1897^2, 75-76) suggested the possibility that Hubal was originally the proper name of the god (Allāh) of Mecca. The circumstantial evidence for this hypothesis, apart from Hubal's known presence in the Kaʿbah, where his was the only statue (Rubin 1990, 103), is mainly the fact that there is no polemic in the Quran against him. A supplicant goes to Allāh's "house", but instead of consulting Allāh consults Hubal (Lammens 1926, 105). On the other hand, as noted already by Wellhausen, Allāh is always a proper name in the Arabic sources, not a common noun, while the tradition clearly indicates that Hubal was a late arrival at Mecca. His introduction may have had significance in terms of tribal allegiances: Hubal was specifically associated with the Kinānah. Also the quotation from Ibn al-Kalbī above with regard to the rebuking of Abū Sufyān indicates that there was indeed a conflict between the cult of Allāh and that of Hubal. Discussion of this question is taken up by others (Fahd 1968: 95-103; 1971; Starcky 1966: cols. 998-99; Peters 1994: 24-25). It remains odd that later tradition did not link Hubal to Allāh in the way that "the daughters of Allāh" (Allāt, Manāt, al-ᶜUzzā) were linked (Fahd 1968: 95-103, see also 1971).

Fahd's attempt to give Hubal's name an etymology based on Akkadian *ḫabālu*, supposedly meaning "être mort", is unconvincing. The verb in question means something more like "ravage, take away" and is used only euphemistically of the dead (and then only in personal names) (see *CAD* Ḫ, 3-7; Stamm 1939, 296-97). The connection of the name Hubal with death can be based on the Arabic *habila*, which in modern usage can mean "be bereaved", but there is no contextual evidence to support such a connection and nothing in our limited knowledge of the iconography of Hubal (male armed with arrows) to suggest it.

On the other hand Fahd rightly rejects the attempts by some earlier scholars to connect Hubal with Saturn or the moon (Fahd 1958: 75-76; 1968: 102-03). Such suggestions have been based partly on the assumption that all Arabian religion is ultimately astral and partly on the Islamic inheritance of a lunar calendar (assuming, contrary to what has been said earlier, that Hubal was the main god of the Kaᶜbah). There is, however, some later evidence (al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal* ed. Cureton 1846, 431) that some alleged that the Kaᶜbah was a centre of a cult of Saturn (Zuḥal, زحل).

In a final note Starcky refers to the possibility that the name of the deity means "the Ancient One" (Arabic *hibil*) (1966, col. 1000; 1982, 195; see also Ryckmans 1934-35, 71; Niehr 1998, 222; for the Arabic see de Biberstein Kazimirski 1960, II, 1383). Such an interpretation of the name may be related to the fact that Hubal was associated in the Kaᶜbah with Abraham, depicted as an old man (al-Azraqī ed. Wüstenfeld 1858, 111 — also Jesus and Mary; see Rubin 1990, 104 with refs.). This etymology, however, in probably secondary and a northerly connection for Hubal is tentatively suggested below.

We may note first one other facet of the study of Hubal, the attempt by Barstad (1978) to find a trace of the god Hubal in the Hebrew Bible. Barstad regards some occurrences of the Hebrew word *heḇel*, normally translated "vanity, nothingness", and found frequently as a derogatory term applied to pagan idols, as occurrences of the name of a Canaanite deity related to Arabian Hubal (e.g. Jer. 10:3; Zech. 10:2). This suggestion has been strongly rejected by Becking (1993 and 1999^{2}). The main weakness in it is the fact that there is no evidence of any such Canaanite deity and to argue for a connection via Moab (which is a possible source of the Meccan Hubal, above) is far too tenuous. It remains the fact, however, that Hubal must have had some ancient antecedents (note also Noja 1994).

A possibility noted by Hommel (1909, 298-300) is a connection between Hubal and Heḇel/Hāḇel, the second son of Adam (in English Abel). He was thinking in terms of twin deities Cain and Abel, but the acceptance of the equation does not necessarily involve accepting the suggestion of the twins or his particular evidences (Old Babylonian personal names). Hommel might have added that Heḇel was turned into a divine figure by the Mandaeans in the form of Hibil-Zīwa and the Mandaeans were present in the Jordan area and in Mesopotamia in the early Christian centuries. This would provide a much closer point of contact than a hypothetical Canaanite deity.

Manōtu and Qaysha

The goddess Manōtu (on vocalization see below) appears a number of times in the Nabataean texts, but mostly in identical contexts and exclusively in Nabataean north Arabia.

She is several times listed with other deities in tomb inscriptions at Ḥegra as the protector of the tomb:

> *wlʿnw dwšrʾ wmnwtw wqyšh kl mn dy* ...
>
> And may Dushara and Manōtu and her Qaysha curse anyone who ... (H 8: 5-6, dated 1 B.C./A.D.).
>
> *wylʿn dwšrʾ wmwtbh wʾlt mn ʿmnd wmnwtw wqyšh mn ......pʾyty ʿmh ldwšrʾ whblw wlmnwtw* ....
>
> And may Dushara and his throne and Allāt of ʿAmnad and Manōtu and her Qaysha curse anyone who ... and he shall be liable to Dushara and Hubalu and to Manōtu in the sum of ... (H 16:3-4, 7-8, 1 B.C./A.D.)

> *wylʿn dwšrʾ wmnwtw kl mn dy* ...
>
> And may Dushara and Manōtu curse anyone who ... (H 19:8, A.D. 26/27)
>
> ... *lʿnt dwšrʾ wmnwtw* ...
>
> ... the curse of Dushara and Manōtu ... (H 31:8: dated to reign of Aretas IV)
>
> ...*dy ʾyty ʿlwhy ḥṭyʾh ldwšrʾ wmnwtw ksp* ...
>
> ... he will be liable to Dushara and Manōtu in the sum of ... (H 34:11-12, A.D. 71/72.

Despite the small number of these inscriptions and the fact that it is not easy to fit the ordering of deities into a neat schema, it is surely significant that in four out of the five Manōtu immediately follows Dushara and in three of the four no other deity is mentioned. No other inscriptions in the Ḥegra series link Dushara with other deities (except H 11: 6, 8, which links him with "all the gods"). It seems very likely, therefore, that Manōtu was regarded as closely connected with Dushara at Ḥegra and in the surrounding region. The aberrant inscription is H 16, in which in one place Allāt and in another Hubalu are placed between Manōtu and Dushara and Manōtu appears to be provided with her own consort.

The name Manōtu is linked also with Dushara's in a graffito from Mabrak an-Nāqah (JS I, 246: no. 184; see *CIS* II, 320F: here spelled defectively):

> *šlmw br šlmw dkyr bṭb wšlm*
> *lʿlm mn qdm dwšrʾ wmntw*
>
> Remembered be Shalmu son of Shalmu for good forever before Dushara and Manōtu.

In addition Manōtu appears linked with Dushara in a rather speculative reconstruction of a graffito above some steles in the Jabal Ithlib area of Ḥegra (JS I, 236: no. 142; *RES* § 1124), while in another inscription (JS I, 249-50: no. 201) the name Manōtu is clear, but the preceding name is not so clear: it may be *ʾrʾ*, a scribal error for *ʾʿrʾ*, the name of the god of Bosra who is linked frequently with Dushara. Again, it may be noted, Dushara's name is not linked with any other deity in this material from northern Arabia.

The goddess probably appears also in an inscription from Taymāʾ.

The reading of the name in the form *mnwh* is far from certain (*CIS* II, 336, according to G.-W. Nebe cited in Beyer and Livingstone 1987, 292), but in any case the inscription is probably not to be regarded as Nabataean (not initially classified as Nabataean by Livingstone in Livingstone, Spaie et al. 1983, 105-6:2; later counted as Nabataean in Beyer and Livingstone 1987, 290-92: no. II, 1) and may be better associated with the earlier Aramaic texts of Taymāʾ (so al-Theeb 1993, 33-35). The goddess appears here with her name in the form of *mnwh* and she is called *mnwh ʾlht ʾlhtʾ*, "goddess of goddesses" (i.e. the greatest goddess) (Beyer and Livingstone 1987, 291).

Finally there are Nabataean personal names in which the goddess's name appears. Again they are from northern Arabia: *tymmnwty* (JS I, 225: no. 92 and 93) and, dated A.D. 267 (and therefore of marginal significance here), *ʿbdmnwtw/ʿbdmnt* (JS I, 172-76: no. 17; cf. Healey and Smith 1989).

mnwtw is undoubtedly the goddess Manāt (see in general Krone 1992, 521-39), well known in Lihyanite personal names like *zdmnt* and *hnmnt* (JS II, 491: Lih no. 228, 478-80: no. 177; see Caskel 1953, 46-7), in Safaitic personal names (Macdonald 1995, 761) and from the Quran 53:20f. (منوة; cf. allusion in 37:150) and early Islamic reports (spelling مناة; see in general Henninger 1954, 98-99). The basic meaning of the name, from the root MNW/Y, is "fate, portion, lot" (= Greek Τύχη). Note may be made of the Syriac ܡܢܬܐ, plur. ܡܢܘܬܐ, "portion". Wenning and Merklein (1997, 106) group her with al-Kutbā, Qaysha, Gadd and Ṣaʿbu (below) as gods of fate. In the Quran she is associated with al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā and according to the tradition she had been invoked like them as a daughter of Allāh by the Quraysh circumambulating the Kaʿbah. According to Ibn al-Kalbī Manāt's cult was centred on Qudayd between Medina and Mecca and her idol, a statue brought from Syria like that of Hubal, was the most ancient of all the idols worshipped by the Arabs and especially venerated by the Aws and Khazraj. Her devotees used to go on pilgrimage which was not completed until they visited her and shaved their heads in her presence. Eventually the Prophet sent ʿAlī to destroy Manāt and he removed two swords which had been dedicated to her (cf. Ibn al-Kalbī, trans. Faris 1952, 12-14, 17, 23; Wellhausen 1897^2, 25-9; Höfner 1965a, 454-5; Fahd 1968, 123-8). Another report has Saʿd b. Zayd confronting the *sādin* of the goddess's temple (Fahd 1968, 126).

Qaysha is discussed below and the interpretation is not certain. It appears to refer either to a consort or associated implement of Manōtu (H 8: 5-6; H 16:3-4). If Starcky's suggestion of a connection with measurement is correct (1966, col. 1001), the name Qaysha would tell us something of Manōtu's role. There would be a connection between "measuring" and "portion, lot": the personified *qyšʾ* would be Manōtu's symbol (like Dushara's *mwtbʾ*).

At Palmyra the goddess Manāt is regularly associated with Bel Ḥammon, a special form of the main Palmyrene god, Bel (*Inv.* XI 99; XII 43; Teixidor 1979, 12-18; du Mesnil du Buisson 1962, 397-98; see also *Inv.* XI 46). She had a sanctuary dedicated in A.D. 89 (XII 48:2), and a Palmyrene dedicated a Latin inscription to her at Várhely in Hungary (Dacia) (*CIL* III, 7954 — c. A.D. 160+). A Palmyrene tessera bearing her name and depicting her seated with a sceptre (measuring rod?) suggests there was a cultic society associated with her (*mnwt*: Ingholt et al 1955: no. 281a). It is fairly clear that she was an Arab import into Palmyra, but note may be made of the considerable ancient Mesopotamian influence there and the fact that *Menītu /Menūtu* was also a title of Ishtar (Fahd 1968, 124; Tallqvist 1938, 373-74), reflected also in *Mᵉnī* in Isaiah 65:11. Also popular in Roman Syria was Nemesis (Seyrig 1932).

Whether Manāt had a planetary or astral aspect is not clear. Dussaud (1955, 142; Höfner 1965a, 454) connected Manāt with Allāt and speculated on her representing the evening star (Venus) in contrast with al-ʿUzzā's representing the morning star, but there is no definite proof of this. Others see Manāt taking al-ʿUzzā's role (Wenning 1996, 258-59).

While there is no real doubt about the identity of this deity, there are considerable problems about the pronunciation of the name in Nabataean (see Healey 1993, 118-19; earlier Winnett 1940, 119-20), though it does not affect our consideration of the deity except in so far as it throws some light on her widespread popularity. The spelling at Taymāʾ, *mnwh*, must reflect pronunciation with a consonantal *wāw* and this is given some remote support by the spelling MANAVAT in the much later Latin inscription from Hungary referred to above. The Nabataean vocalization would then be */manawatu/* (Nöldeke's revised view, 1887, 709 and n. 2; see also Lidzbarski 1915, 270-1; Caskel 1926, 24; more recently Spitaler 1960, 220; Diem 1973, 236, n. 49). The supposedly Ḥijāzi orthography of the name in the Quran, منوة, could reflect an old pronunciation tradition in which the *w* was pronounced. On the other hand vocalization as *manōtu* or *manātu* is supported by the defective spelling *mntw* in *CIS* II, 320F (above) and the Lihyanite and "Thamudic" defective spellings *mnt* (Caskel 1953, 46-7; JS I, 172-76: no. 17: "Thamudic" *ʿbdmnt* = *ʿbdmnwtw*). This is the usual vocalization accepted within Nabataean studies. Different moments in the development of the name may be represented by these different sources and the development was not uniform throughout the linguistic region involved.

The deity Qaysha is very enigmatic even by Nabataean standards of enigmaticism! The word *qyšʾ* appears in precisely this form only once, in one of the Ḥegra tomb texts, dated A.D. 31/32:

> ... *knsḥtʾ dnh yhyb (bb)yt qyšʾ* ...
>
> according to the copy of this deposited in the temple of *qyšʾ* (H 36:9)

The context is of the deposit of the legal document concerning the ownership and use of the tomb in question in an archive, presumably, though not necessarily, a local archive in Ḥegra. Qaysha appears to be a divine name and we may then assume that this deity had a temple in Ḥegra.

A little less certain are two other occurrences of the word at Ḥegra in the lists of gods invoked to protect tombs. Thus we find in two texts of 1 B.C./A.D.:

> *wlʿnw dwšrʾ wmnwtw wqyšh kl mn dy* ...
>
> And may Dushara and Manōtu and *qyšh* curse anyone who ... (H 8:5-6)
>
> *wylʿn dwšrʾ wmwtbh wʾlt mn ʿmnd wmnwtw wqyšh mn* ...
>
> And may Dushara and his throne and Allāt of ʿAmnad and Manōtu and *qyšh* curse anyone who ... (H 16:3-4).

It will be readily seen that there are ambiguities here. The immediate context of all three texts suggests we are dealing with the name of a deity and the two spellings, *qyšʾ/h* might be simply orthographic variants (cf. *mwhbʾ/h*: H 4:5; 5:6).

Several scholars have, however, taken the view that *qyšʾ* is a common noun in view of *qyšh* in two cases contrasted with *qyšʾ* in H 36. It was early suggested that the noun *qyšʾ* means "spouse, husband" and *qyšh* "her spouse" (i.e. Manōtu's spouse, possibly Hubal). This is how Cantineau translates it in H 16 (II, 27-8: for the confusion in Cantineau see Healey 1993, 119-20). However, the only etymological support for “spouse” is in reference to Arabic قيس, “lord”, or the like, in, for example, al-Hamdānī (see Healey 1993, 119-20).

Starcky (1966, col. 1001; also Zayadine 1989, 118-19; Gawlikowski 1990, 2668; Niehr 1998, 222) sought an alternative etymology for the supposed common noun in the Arabic root QYS, “measure” (*miqyās*, “measuring instrument”) and saw here the emblem of just measurement and justice associated with Manōtu. He suggests a parallel with “Dushara and his throne” (H 16:4), and took *byt qyšʾ* in H 36:9 to mean “house of measurement” (the title of the archive building).

However this root does not occur elsewhere in Nabataean or other forms of Aramaic. The phrase *byt qyšʾ* is much better understood as “temple of Qaysha”, with *qyšʾ* a divine name. The name may have had some fairly transparent meaning in Nabataean, whether to do with measuring or not. The parallel with “Dushara and his throne” (H 16:4) (note also “Allāt and her *wgrʾ*”) suggests *qyšh* in H 8 and 16 may mean “*her* Qaysha”, with Qaysha used as a transparent divine name (see more fully Healey 1993, 119-20).

Otherwise we are completely in the dark about this deity, though it is reasonable to suppose that he is a local god of Ḥegra, evidently with some role in relation to the conservation of legal archives. He is also clearly male and was associated with Manōtu. Since Manōtu is elsewhere possibly associated with Hubal it is not impossible to think that the name Qaysha might have been an epithet of Hubal. On the other hand, Arabic names like ʿAbd al-Qays and Imruʾ al-Qays are well known and they may point to an Arabian god, Qays. Starcky (1966, col. 1001) notes the existence of an idol called al-Qays in Arab tradition, but Fahd (1968, 136-8) offers no substantial evidence of such a deity, whose existence is only guessed at from the personal names (Fischer 1927). Fischer also notes the suggestion that Qays is related to Edomite Qōs (Gottheil 1898, 200-01).

Foreign Goddesses

Isis

The cult of Isis spread throughout the Roman world (Solmsen 1979; Takács 1995; on her mysteries see neatly Martin 1987, 72-81). The influence of Isis in Petra has been extensively discussed (Roche 1987, Lindner 1988, Hammond 1990, Zayadine 1991a, Donner 1995, Meza 1996 and most recently Parlasca 1998). It has been suggested, for example, that the Petra Khazneh was in some way dedicated to Isis (Milik and Starcky 1975, 123; see Parr 1957, 7; Wright 1962; Zayadine 1991a, 301), a suggestion based on the iconography of one of the main figures on the façade, a Tyche with Isis features. But the evidence of an actual Isis cult is centred on a particular site in Wādī es-Siyyagh at Sidd el-Mrēriyyeh, studied in detail recently by Merklein and Wenning (1998a; see Plate VIIa).

The cult-site consists of a rock-ledge about 5 metres wide with a series of cult-niches, three of which are certainly related and one of which is surrounded by a two-part inscription (Milik and Starcky 1975, 120-4, pl. 45; see also Teixidor 1986, 408; corrected reading of Merklein and Wenning 1998a, 167-68):

> *ʾlhtʾ*
> *dʾ ʾsy*
> *dy ʿbdw bny br.....*
> *bḥd bʾyr*
> *bšnt ḥmš*
> *..ʿbdt*
> *mlk*
>
> This goddess is Isis, which the sons of PN made... On the first of Iyyar in the fifth year .. Obodas the king.

Judging from the script and the formulary this must be Obodas III and the date is therefore 26/25 B.C. (in fact 25 since the month is Iyyar).

This is the first clear reference to Isis in Nabataean epigraphy. The form of the name Isis here is paralleled, for example, in an Aramaic papyrus from Egypt (*CIS* II, 146: B4: *ʾsy rbty*; see also *CIS* II, 135). There have also been personal names recorded which might contain this theophore (see references in Merklein and Wenning 1998a, 169 n. 28: many of the instances are rather doubtful).

The figure in the niche is damaged but clearly interpretable iconographically as an Isis figure: Donner 1995 relates it to another probable Isis figure with the characteristic "Isis-knot" from Wādī Abū ʿOllēqah (Parr 1962; Lindner 1989b, 287-88). Isis represents and is represented by a throne. In the Sidd el-Mrēriyyeh Isis note may be made of the fact that the throne appears to sit on a stylized mountain-top (Donner 1995, 12-13).

Given the position of the Isis "sanctuary" or cult-centre, outside the centre of Petra and on a ledge which could only accommodate a small number of devotees at any one time, it is possible to conclude (though some caution is needed) that Isis was only of minority interest. She might have been served by a *Kultgenossenschaft*, a *mrzḥʾ*, a religious association (on these see Chapter VI). That the devotees were not, however, foreigners (Egyptians or others) but Nabataeans is clear from the language, script and dating of the text. The personal names in the damaged part of the text also seem to point in the same direction (*brhbl*, *br qymwʾ* [?], *br tymʾ*: so in Milik and Starcky 1975). Lindner (1989b) suggested that the site was connected with a kind of pilgrim way from central Petra to Jebel Harun and he identified evidence of there having been a small temple or peristyle at the site.

The formula used to identify the statue is a little unusual: "This goddess is Isis". The word "goddess" is superfluous. This contrasts with the formulae we find elsewhere, "This is Allāt, the goddess, who is in Bosra" (Savignac 1933, 411-12: no. 2); "This is al-ʿUzzā and Mār Baytā which PN made..." (413-15: no. 4). The formula used here for Isis might imply that she was especially in need of explanation to anyone visiting the site, though the situation is far from clear. It could be that the other niches at the site contained goddesses also, from which Isis needed to be distinguished.

There is one other slight and very late piece of epigraphic evidence for Isis dated A.D. 256 (151 in the Bosran era), a damaged Greek inscription from the Petra Sīq referring to a priest of Isis, ἱερεὺς Ἴσ[ιδος (Milik and Starcky 1975, 123; Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904, 223-24: no. 60, 11). There is also one piece of external evidence in an early 2nd century A.D. Greek papyrus from Egypt which records that Isis was worshipped as Soteira (σώτειρα) at Petra: ἐπὶ τῆς Πέτρας σώτειραν (Grenfell and Hunt 1915, 197: no. 1380: 91-92; Totti 1985, 67: no. 20: 91-92).

There is evidence of Isis influence in the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra. There are fragments of statues from the temple (see Zayadine 1982, 387-89) and note may be made also of an Osiris figure on a statue originally dedicated at the temple of Athribis (Meza 1993; 1996; Parlasca 1998, 67). Well known is the small "eye-idol" with the words "goddess of Ḥayyan son of Naybat" and Isis-decoration (Hammond 1981; see Plate IVa), and another eye-idol, from ez-Zantūr at Petra, has Isiac decoration (Zayadine 1991a, 283-85; Lindner 1988). In addition, a Zeus-Serapis figure from debris of the monumental gateway at Petra provides further evidence, since Serapis was Isis's spouse (Parr 1957, 6-7).

This evidence does not, however, imply that Isis was worshipped as such in the Winged Lions Temple, much less that the main deity of the temple was Isis (against Zayadine 1991a, 286, who there took the temple to be dedicated to Isis-Osiris). Isis was the supreme goddess in this period on the Egyptian side, and this explains sufficiently the attaching of Isis-elements to the Nabataean goddess of this important temple, which no doubt had Egyptian contacts.

Atargatis

Atargatis too had a widespread and popular cult (Martin 1987, 81-84). Atargatis features have been detected both at Tannūr (Glueck 1965) and in the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra (Hammond 1973, 97). So far as Tannūr is concerned, the views of Glueck are particularly explicit: he identified the female figure supposed to have formed the lintel of the sanctuary at Tannūr as Atargatis, while other figures represented her as grain goddess or dolphin goddess (Glueck 1978; Drijvers 1980, 114-16). This might be because the Tannūr sanctuary was dedicated to a version of Qōs-Dushara as a supreme deity with international claims, his consort taking on characteristics of Atargatis as the best-known international goddess of the Semitic world. The consensus now seems to be, however, that Atargatis as such was not worshipped as one of the main deities of the Nabataeans. Zayadine, for example (1979, 194-97), notes the absence of specific evidence to connect the Winged Lions goddess with Atargatis.

As in the case of Isis, however, there is very slight evidence of a minority cult of Atargatis in an inscription or inscriptions in Wādī es-Siyyagh (Plate VIIb). Under a cult-niche containing a betyl with star-like eyes and a nose appears the word *ʾtrʿtʾ*, apparently “Atargatis” (*CIS* II, 423), though the spelling is odd: where the word occurs in Palmyrene it is spelled with initial *ʿayin* (*CIS* II, 3927:4), as would be expected etymologically, though in fact the evidence of Atargatis cult at Palmyra is slight (Teixidor 1979, 71-76)

As we have seen in Chapter III, there appears to be reference twice on the same rock-face, though perhaps not as part of the same inscription, to *mnbgytʾ*, “the (female) Membījite” (*CIS* II, 422; see Zayadine 1991a, 285-86; Lindner and Zangenberg 1993). We owe to Clermont-Ganneau (1901a; *RES* §§ 2017-18) the insight that the reference here must be to Hierapolis/Membīj, the centre of the international cult of the Syrian Goddess Atargatis described in some detail by Lucian. It is not clear, however, that this feminine *nisbah* form describes the goddess (against Zayadine 1986a, 222): the normal formula for the place of origin of a cult is *DN dy b-*, and the word *mnbgytʾ* does not follow immediately after the divine name. The word may refer rather to a devotee of Atargatis, but in any case the implication would be of a connection with the Atargatis cult.

Again, as in the case of the Isis cult, Atargatis looks as if she is of interest only to a small minority of Nabataeans or even Syrian visitors, though the inscription and the betyl are both in local rather than any Syrian style (Lindner and Zangenberg 1993, 149). Indeed the representation of Atargatis in this way is remarkable in itself. It is possible that Nabataeans were involved in a tradition of pilgrimage to Hierapolis, as Lindner and Zangenberg (1993, 148-50) claim, with some uncertain evidence for Atargatis at Tannūr and clearer evidence in the Ḥawrān on the pilgrim route. But the evidence of Atargatis at Petra is exiguous and it is unwise to build too much on it.

Evidence of Other Deities

Dutara is described as the god of Ḥotayshu (*dwtrʾ ʾlh ḥtyšw*) in *CIS* II, 354:2, the important inscription from Petra referring to the cult of ʿObodat. The reading of the name is confirmed by Milik (1959, 555-60) and accepted by Dijkstra (1995, 57-60), but there is no explanation of the name apart from the observation that the pattern is the same as in the name Dushara. This establishes the deity as male and really excludes the possibility of a connection with *trhy/tdhy* in a Ḥegran tomb inscription (H 12:9: Healey 1993, 141). The form *dwtrʾ* might even be a dialectal variant of *dwšrʾ* (Wenning 1997, 190).

tdhy/trhy is equally obscure (H 12: 9). The only deity mentioned in the inscription inside the same tomb on which the reference to this deity appears (H 11) is Dushara. A Nabataean inscription from Taymāʾ refers to a goddess called *trh* or *tdh*, called *ʾlhtʾ* (*CIS* II, 336:3; G.-W. Nebe, cited in Beyer and Livingstone 1987, 292, would read *mnwh* for *tdh/trh*). Lidzbarski, reading *trh*, thought it an abbreviation of the divine name of Atargatis (1902, 195-6) or some other divine name (1915, 269-70).

Another obscure deity, named only once in a Nabataean source, is Ashar, who is named as the god of Muʿaynu in *RES* §2053 dated A.D. 124. The god apparently had a temple (*bt ʾšrw*) at Deir el-Meshqūq in the Ḥawrān. The same god is found at Palmyra (Teixidor 1979, 83-84; Drijvers 1976, 21; Milik 1972, 341-42).

Also obscure, and not attested in Nabataean inscriptions, but in Greek inscriptions from a Nabataean temple at Jerash, is Pakeidas (Wenning 1987, 55; Starcky 1966, 997-98; Vincent 1940; Hammond 1973, 98). It is clear that this god, whose name may be related to the Semitic root PQ̰D ("oversee", etc.), is quite important, the partner of Hera in a Jerash inscription dated A.D. 73/74 and dedicated by an ἀρχιβωμιστὴ[ς θεοῦ 'Αγ]ίου Πακειδᾶ καὶ Ἥρας, "chief priest of the holy god Pakeidas and of Hera". In a related context appear several dedications "to the Arabian God" (θεῷ ἁγίῳ 'Αραβικῷ), including one referring to an eagle figure (Gatier 1982, 272-74: no. 4). This in turn might be connectable with Q̰ōs (as in Glueck 1965, 479 and pl. 140). Note may also be made of the name Pakeidokosos at Delos (Roussel and Launey 1937, 290-91: no. 2311), a form which might contain the name of Edomite Q̰ōs. Vincent (1940) discussed various possible identifications, opting for an identification of Pakeidas-Dushara with the Arabian God, later treated as solar. This is far from certain.

Detected solely on the basis of iconography is a Nabataean lunar cult (Roche 1995). The evidence includes the niche with crescent moon figures near the Madhbaḥ high-place at Petra and Roche has discovered other lunar iconography at Petra. The figure to the right of the Dīwān at Ḥegra and the figure thought to represent Allāt at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh might also be interpreted as lunar in character. As to a likely lunar deity, South Arabian Wadd seems the likeliest candidate, since he appears in personal names (e.g. *ʿbdwdw*). There is, however, no direct Nabataean text evidence which has any bearing on this.

There are other even less clear divine names found isolated or as part of theophoric personal names (see the list of Cantineau 1932, 170). Tāʾ has priests repeatedly mentioned in Sinai inscriptions (*khn tʾ* in *CIS* II, 506, 766, 1748, etc.) and occurs in the Nabataean incantation text (Naveh 1979, 112-13: line 3), where we also find reference to El. Lidzbarski (1915, 269-70) identified the name as an abbreviation of the name Atargatis (see also on *trh* above), though in the incantation it appears to be masculine. Another divine name from Sinai is *kywbk* or *bwbk* (*CIS* II, 572, 698, 3048). *šʿyʿw* is the local deity of Sīʿ (*RES* § 1092). This and the deified city of Bosra (Milik 1980a, 15) are discussed further below (Tyches). There is also a possible deity called *hlh* connected with a place called *mšpt* (Littmann 1914, 71-74: no. 96) and another called *ʾhyw*, who appears in personal names (Zayadine 1990c, 162: *CIS* II, 2678, 1039, etc.). Al-Baʿali (*ʾlbʿly*) appears in personal names and in a dedication (*CIS* II, 1479: *šlm wʾlw br ḥlṣt qdm ʾlbʿly*).

The Protective Deities

It is convenient to gather together a series of deities primarily concerned with protection of aspects of human life and society. In a sense all deities are protective, but some clearly have such a function explicit in their characterization or name. Teixidor (1979, 94-97) gives an account of the wider background of protective spirits and their connection with the messenger figures of biblical tradition. Specific textual evidence in this area in Nabataean is practically non-existent, especially by comparison with Palmyra where we have two categories of protective deities, the *ginnayē* and the *gaddē*, "jinns" and "fortunes" (Teixidor 1979, 77-100). There the jinns (who are not intrinsically harmful beings, as they later became) appear to form one subgroup of the pantheon, which includes Abgal, Maʿanu, Shaʿadu and Shayʿ-al-Qawm (though the latter is a foreign deity at Palmyra). They are protective deities. The fortunes are protectors too, of individuals (*gd tymy*) and of cities. Thus there is reference for Palmyra and Dura-Europos to the *gdʾ dy tdmwr* and the *gdʾ dy dwrʾ* (du Mesnil du Buisson 1939, 53-54). The protective deity might be male or female. The term *gnyʾ* does not appear in Nabataean, while the term *gdʾ* has been detected once in a very damaged and uncertain context (*RES* §53 = 806 = 1474).

We have already noted protective aspects of Manāt and Qaysha. Shayʿ-al-Qawm appears to have had a specific role in the protection of caravans. But in addition there are personal deities, family deities and city deities, and this progression from the personal to the civic is naturally crowned by the state deities, Dushara and (less clearly) Allāt/al-ʿUzzā.

Shayʿ-al-Qawm

One of the Nabataean cults with a fairly clear background in the nomadic and desert-dwelling traditions of the northern Arabs is that of Shayʿ-al-Qawm: *šyʿʾlqwm* (briefly Gawlikowski 1990, 2669; Knauf 1990b). Worship of this deity, with the name in the form *s*^{2}*ʿ-h-qm*, is also quite well known from "Safaitic" (Dussaud and Macler 1903, 62-63;

Sourdel 1952, 81; Macdonald 1995, 761; Littmann 1943 nos. 348 [associated with Allāt, Gad-ʿAwīdh, Baalshamin and Dushara], 415, 417, 1198 [with Allāt and Gad-ʿAwīdh]). Within the strictly Nabataean context (though it is not possible or appropriate to separate Nabataean culture from the Safaitic inscriptions completely) the number of inscriptions mentioning the deity is not large, but the cult was widely spread.

At the southern extreme Shayʿ-al-Qawm is mentioned in an inscription from Ḥegra. The text is a graffito to the left of and probably related to a cult-niche opposite the Dīwān at the Jabal Ithlib "entrance" (JS I, 221: no. 72, and see 414-15, fig. 204):

> *šyʿʾlqwm ʾlh(ʾ)*
>
> Shayʿ-al-Qawm the god.

This is an unusual text and something has probably been lost (such as *dnh* at the beginning, which would give "This is Shayʿ-al-Qawm...": compare the *dʾ ʾlʿzʾ* inscription discussed above: Savignac 1933, 413-15: no. 4).

In the Ḥawrān was found another dedication to Shayʿ-al-Qawm. It is on two basalt slabs from Tell Ghāriyyeh:

> *dnh ʾrktʾ dy ʿbd ʿdwdw*
> *br gšm lšyʿʾlqwm ʾlh*
> *ʾ bšnt ʿšryn wšt lrbʾl mlkʾ ml*
> *k nbṭw dy ʾḥyy wšzb ʿmh*
>
> This is the portico (?) which PN made for Shayʿ-al-Qawm the god in the year twenty-six of Rabel..... (*RES* §§ 471, 86; Dussaud and Macler 1903, 309-10: no. 8)

The date of the inscription is A.D. 96/7 since the formulary leaves us in no doubt that the king is Rabel II. Though the word *ʾrktʾ* was at first interpreted as meaning "sarcophagus" (and this is retained by Levinson 1974, 132), such a meaning is quite impossible: one cannot have a sarcophagus dedicated to a god. Far more likely is some architectural meaning such as pillar or portico and it seems very likely that there is a connection with the architectural term *ʿrkwtʾ* in the Turkmāniyyeh inscription at Petra (see Chapter III; Healey 1993, 240; Knauf 1990b, 176: *ʾd(!)ktʾ*, "aedicula", as also in the Turkmāniyyeh text). Whatever the precise meaning of the term, the inscription clearly attests to the cult of Shayʿ-al-Qawm in the Ḥawrān, a fact consonant with the Safaitic evidence (above).

There are also personal names from various locations which may be theophorics based on this god's name:

> *šyʿʾl* (*RES* § 2041: Littmann 1914, 11-12: no. 10 [restored]) from the Ḥawrān;
>
> *šyʿʾlhy* (possibly a Palmyrene: *RES* § 1421; Dalman 1912, 91-92: no. 68) from Petra;
>
> *ʿbdšyʿʾ* (*CIS* II 904) from Sinai;
>
> *zydqwmy*, *ʿbdqwmy* etc. (see list of Cantineau 1932, II, 142).

None of these is a normal theophoric: the composite nature of the divine name creating a considerable problem. If the connection with Shayʿ-al-Qawm is correctly detected, it would seem that the first part of his name was sufficient to identify him (see below) and the second part is normally elided.

The most important of the inscriptions related to Shayʿ-al-Qawm is not in the Nabataean script and dialect, but in Palmyrene and was written by or for a Nabataean on an altar found in Palmyra dated A.D. 132, thus after the end of the Nabataean kingdom:

> *(t)rtyn ʿlwtʾ ʾln ʿbd ʿbydw br ʿnmw*
> *(b)r šʿdlt nbṭyʾ rwḥyʾ dy hwʾ prš*
> *(b)ḥyrtʾ wbmšrytʾ dy ʿnʾ*
> *lšyʿʾlqwm ʾlhʾ ṭbʾ wškrʾ dy lʾ*
> *štʾ ḥmr ʿl ḥywhy wḥyy mʿyty*
> *wʿbdw ʾḥwhy wšʿdlt brh byrḥ*
> *ʾlwl šnt 443 wdkyr zbydʾ br*
> *šmʿwn br blʿqb gyrh wrḥmh qdm*
> *šyʿʾlqwm ʾlhʾ ṭbʾ.......*
>
> These two altars ʿUbaydu ..., the Nabataean of the Rawāḥ tribe who was a cavalryman at the fort and camp of ʿĀnah, for Shayʿ-al-Qawm the good and bountiful god who does not drink wine, for his own life and the life of ......, in the month of Elul in the year 443. And remembered be Zabida ... his patron and friend before Shayʿ-al-Qawm the good god... (*CIS* II, 3973; Cooke 1903, 303-05: no. 140B; Littmann 1901, 381-90).

There is no need for an extensive treatment of this inscription: others have discussed it (e.g. Teixidor 1973; Dijkstra 1995, 108-10, as well as Cooke, Littmann already cited). In the present context we may note: (a) the Nabataean dedicator (a cavalryman at ʿĀnah on the Euphrates in the Provincial period); (b) the epithets "good and bountiful" applied to the god, as they are applied to several deities in Palmyra (Healey 1998); (c) the gloss to the effect that Shayᶜ-al-Qawm does not drink wine (on which point see further below).

There is other possible evidence of Shayᶜ-al-Qawm at Palmyra in the occurrence of his name with the word *bᶜltk*, possibly a title of Allāt/Astarte, on a tessera (Ingholt et al. 1955, no. 332, side b; du Mesnil du Buisson 1962, 357; Teixidor 1979, 87). This involves restoration: *(šy)ᶜlqwm*, but might imply that there were other devotees of the god at Palmyra (other than the "Nabataean" soldier noted above). Macdonald (1998, 186) has cautioned against assuming that there were Palmyrene worshippers of the god, though he does not mention the tessera. Knauf (1990b, 176) lists some of the Safaitic evidence showing that the god was associated with various deities including Allāt and Dushara (*CIS* V 2839; 3263).

What then can we say about this deity? The etymology of the name is fairly secure. On the basis of a putative Arabic form شايع القوم the probable meaning is "the one who accompanies (*or* aids) the people" and this title may point to a role as a protector of caravans or of soldiers (since a number of inscriptions to the god are made by soldiers: Knauf 1990b, 176-77). In this context Teixidor (1977, 89) suggests that Shayᶜ-al-Qawm is a kind of angel, a protector of travelling peoples like the angel of Yahweh in relation to the exodus of the ancient Israelites (Exodus 23: 20, 23).

The opposition to wine can reasonably be assumed to relate to a general disapproval of wine rather than the temporary abstention as associated in ancient times with the holy war (Knauf 1990b, 177). Clermont-Ganneau (1901f) expanded upon, though with reservations, by Sourdel (1952, 81-84), noted that as an anti-alcohol deity Shayᶜ-al-Qawm had a role with regard to Dushara, or the Dionysiac version of Dushara, similar to that of Lycurgus with regard to Dionysos himself (also Knauf 1990b). Shayᶜ-al-Qawm/Lycurgus was especially loved by soldiers and the myth of this conflict between gods became very popular in Syria and Arabia, where the fourth-century A.D. poet Nonnos of Panopolis set the final scene of the conflict (Zayadine 1989, 117; Nonnos, *Dionysiaca* xx, 149 - xxi, 169). There are a number of Greek dedications to Lycurgus from Ḥebrān and elsewhere in the Ḥawrān (Littmann et al. 1921, 303-04: no. 663 [= Waddington 1968, no. 2286a], 396-99: no. 789, 441: no. 801^2; Sourdel 1952, 82-83). Lycurgus might have been introduced into the area as an *interpretatio graeca* of the native Shayᶜ-al-Qawm (Knauf 1990b, 176).

The theme of disapproval of wine is found in another source on the Nabataeans, Diodorus Siculus, though there is no specific reference to this deity:

> They live in the open air, claiming as native land a wilderness that has neither rivers nor abundant springs from which it is possible for a hostile army to obtain water. It is their custom neither to plant grain, set out any fruit-bearing tree, use wine, nor construct any house; and if anyone is found acting contrary to this, death is his penalty. They follow this custom because they believe that those who possess these things are, in order to retain the use of them, easily compelled by the powerful to do their bidding..... (XIX, 94.2: trans. Greer 1954).

It would be unwise to make too much of this note, but there does seem to be a basic point about the nomadic lifestyle of the Nabataeans and the rejection of wine may be more to do with not getting tied to vineyards. There is no hint here of a religious motivation for the avoidance of wine, despite the fact that wine-avoidance for libations in certain Greek and Hellenized Egyptian cults is well known (Clermont-Ganneau 1901f, 393-94; Littmann 1901, 381-90).

Since the phrase Shayᶜ-al-Qawm is a descriptive rather than a proper name, it is tempting to try to find another better-known deity behind the title. In the Nabataean context the difficulty would be that many of the other deities have names which were originally epithets. However, Knauf (1990b, 179-80) suggests identifying Shayᶜ-al-Qawm with Arabian Ruḍā (Palmyrene Arṣu), who does not otherwise appear in Nabataean. The connection would be made via the militaristic aspect. He goes on to argue that Shayᶜ-al-Qawm might be identifiable originally with Dushara.

Personal Deities: the Divine Obodas

Personal deities were venerated in private cults, the most visible type being the cult of the *marzēḥā*, which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. We have already seen evidence of private cults of Isis and Atargatis. One particularly important cult of this kind is centred on a deity called ᶜObodat (*ᶜbdt*), who may be a divinized king. This would, if correctly interpreted, be a very distinctive feature (within the Semitic context). The Seleucid-Ptolemaic precedent for such an idea is the most obvious source for its introduction into the official cult of the Nabataeans (Peters 1972, 465-70), but under the Roman Empire the tradition was reinforced in the East by the apotheosis of Augustus and his successors (Beard et al. 1998, 206-10). Nor should we ignore the fact that the post-mortal elevation of kings has a long tradition in the Semitic world (Healey 1995b).

The Nabataean inscriptions which describe *ʿbdt* as a god are clear enough. The best known inscription is that from a cult installation at en-Nmēr in Petra. A statue in the cult-room was dedicated to ʿObodat and the inscription is dated to A.D. 20 (*CIS* II, 354; Milik 1959, 559-60; Dijkstra 1995, 57-60):

> *dnh ṣlmʾ dy ʿbdt ʾlhʾ dy ʿbdw bny ḥnynw br ḥtyšw br pṭmwn*
>
> This is the image of ʿObodat the god which the sons of ... made ...

The inscription goes on to say that the dedication was made "for the life of" Aretas (IV) and other members of the royal family (Shaqīlat, the queen, etc.). There is thus an association here between the god ʿObodat and the royal family and this would be consistent with the view that ʿObodat is a royal ancestor (below). The text also interestingly indicates the presence of a statue of a god as early as A.D. 20.

Also quite clear is a memorial inscription above a niche near the Deir monument at Petra (*RES* §1423; Dalman 1912, 92-94: no. 73; picture of niche in Dalman 1908, 274, pl. 216):

> *dkyr ʿbydw br zqʾ wḥbrwhy mrzḥ ʿbdt ʾlhʾ*
>
> Remembered be PN and his companions, the *marzēḥā* of the god ʿObodat.

This evidently refers to some kind of *Kultgenossenschaft* of devotees of the deity. Though based on restoration, there may be another dedication to this enigmatic divine figure from ʿAvdat (Naveh 1967, 188-89, re-reading Negev 1961, 128-29: no. 2; Dijkstra 1995, 67-68).

Then there is an important and much discussed inscription from near ʿAvdat published by Negev (with Naveh and Shaked) in 1986 and assigned to the late 1st or early 2nd century A.D., which begins

> *dkyr bṭb qrʾ qdm ʿbdt ʾlhʾ*...
>
> Remembered for good be he who reads (?) before ʿObodat the god ...

The same text also refers to a statue set up before ʿObodat the god.

Perhaps less clear, though also suggestive, is a graffito, *ḥy ʿbdt*, "as

ʿObodat lives" (*RES* §527; Lagrange 1904, 291-92; Jaussen, Savignac and Vincent 1904, 409) from ʿAvdat. There are also Greek inscriptions of late date from ʿAvdat dedicated to θεῷ ʼΟβοδα (Negev 1981, 19: no. 6) and Ζεῦ ʼΟβοδα (Negev 1981, 15: no. 3; 19: no. 6, 18: no. 4; 26: no. 7 dated A.D. 293/94: note also 13: no. 1d; 19: no. 5 and possibly 14: no. 1f), though it is not completely clear whether the reference in these is to the god ʿObodat or the god of ʿAvdat, as Negev originally thought (1981, 16; contrast his later view in 1986, 59).

In addition we may note the later continuation of the belief that the Nabataeans worshipped a deity of this name in Eusebius' *On the Theophania*, ii, 12, where it is stated in the Syriac version (ed. Lee 1842), that the Arabians worshipped ܕܘܣܐܪܝܢ ܘܐܘܒܕܘܣ, i.e. Dusares and Obodos. The latter is obviously a reflection of Greek ʼΟβοδας, itself a reflection of Nabataean *ʿbdt* (see *TS*, 52). We find the same tradition of Arab worship of "Obodas and Dusares" earlier in Tertullian (c. A.D. 160-225; *Ad nationes*, ii, 8).

That there was a divinity called ʿObodat is, therefore, incontrovertible. Less clear, however, is the relationship between the god *ʿbdt* and the several kings called by this name, in Greek form Obodas. The assumption of most of the earlier literature was that the god was the deified Obodas I (c. 96-85 B.C.) or Obodas III (30-9 B.C.) as glorious ancestor. Thus Lidzbarski (1915, 278) refers to the divine ʿObodat as ἀρχηγός. This is made explicit only in one source, Stephanus of Byzantium. In connection with his entry on the place-name ʼΟβοδα in the *Ethnika* he states (ed. Meineke 1849, 482: 15-7):

> Οὐράνιος ʼΑραβικῶν τετάρτῳ "ὅπου ʼΟβόδης ὁ βασιλεύς, ὃν θεοποιοῦσι, τέθαπται"
>
> Uranius in the fourth *Arabika* [says]: 'Where King Obodas, whom they deify, is buried'.

We have pointed out earlier that such ideas would not be completely foreign to the Semitic religious tradition and the concept of the divinized king must have been a familiar one in all the Hellenized courts of the Greco-Roman Near East. The apotheosis of a Nabataean king might be attributable to the nationalistic and dynastic ideology of Aretas IV and outside influence from Egypt or the Greco-Roman West. Among those who have supported this interpretation of the evidence some think Obodas I is the likely candidate for apotheosis (e.g. Starcky 1966, col. 972; Bowersock 1983, 62-63), while others prefer Obodas III (frequently numbered II in the literature: Hammond 1973, 103-04; Negev 1986, 107-08, 111-12).

Also noteworthy in this connection is a series of Nabataean personal names in which the names of Nabataean kings fill the slot normally occupied by a divine name (reference to the names uses for convenience the numbers in Negev 1991a): *ʿbdʿbdt* (815) (also *ʾwšʿbdt* and *tymʿbdt* [56, 1224]); *ʿbdḥrtt* (802); *ʿbdmlkw* (808, 811) (also *tymmnkw* [1222]); *ʿbdrbʾl* (824). These might be taken to suggest divinization not only of ʿObodat, but of *all* the Nabataean kings. Against this, however, stands the fact that the same role in personal names could be filled by queens, as is clear from the Nabataean names *ʿbdḥldw* (801) and *ʾmtḥldw* (109) and the Hismaic *ʿbds*^{1}*qlt*, alongside Hismaic *ʿbdḥrṯt*, *ʿbdʿbdt* and *tmʿbdt* (Macdonald and King 1999, 437-38, referring to an unpublished thesis by King). Ḥuldu and Shaqīlat were queens of Aretas IV. It is unlikely that the queens too were divinized!

In fact most of the names involved can be explained as basileophoric rather than theophoric. The prefixes *ʿbd-* and *tym-* mean "servant of ... " and do not necessarily imply worship. *ʾwš-*, "gift of ... ", might be harder to explain, but it only occurs among these names with ʿObodat and in our view it is really only in relation to ʿObodat that the question of divinization arises.

Many scholars have, however, accepted the divinization of Obodas. Teixidor (1977, 78) has Obodas I deified at his death, though it is unlikely to have been until much later that he was apotheosized. Recent discussion, however, has tended to doubt the divinization even of Obodas (especially Dijkstra 1995, 319-21; Wenning 1997, 190-92). Apart from the fact that it is hard to detect any specific reason why Obodas I or Obodas III should have been deified, there is also the fact that the most favoured candidate, Obodas III, was probably buried in Petra, possibly in the so-called Corinthian Tomb, not at ʿAvdat, where no tomb of Obodas has been identified. On the other hand, while it is plausible to regard *ʿbdḥrtt*, *ʿbdrbʾl* and *ʿbdmlkw* as basileophoric names, common in the first century A.D., when there were kings of these names, it is does not necessarily follow that we must regard the name *ʿbdʿbdt* as basileophoric. This personal name is common in the first century A.D., but the last king called ʿObodat died in 9 B.C. It is possible, as Negev implies (1991a, 200), that the name arose in the earlier period as a basileophoric but became traditional, but the only other plausible reason for continuing interest in Obodas would be because he had become the object of some cult of a dynastic ancestor.

Caution is clearly needed. The fact remains, however, that there was a god called ʿObodat and it is likely that he was associated in some way with the royal family and with ʿAvdat, perhaps as its local deity. Stephanus of Byzantium or Uranius' report on the tomb of Obodas may be simply based on a false attempt to explain the place-name (Wenning 1997, 190-92). It is also to be noted that the cult of Obodas is not a state cult, so far as we can tell, but a private cult — the evidence is of *mrzḥyʾ*, not temple rituals (Wenning 1997, 190-92). Whether the god ʿObodat is a divinized king could only be confirmed by the discovery of a more explicit inscription. That subsequent kings were deified is, in any case, much more doubtful. The personal names discussed above are insufficient evidence for this.

What is likely is that all the kings of the dynasty received special treatment at death. This is clear in so far as it is widely agreed that certain of the most elaborate tombs at Petra are royal. Several have been identified. If the tomb of Obodas III is not at ʿAvdat, it may be the Corinthian Tomb at Petra. The Khazneh may be the tomb of Aretas III (with associated *triclinium*: Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904, I, 231-32: no. 65, fig. 261). The Urn Tomb may be that of Aretas IV, the Palace Tomb that of Malichus II (see Niehr 1998, 231-34). But there is much speculation in all of this.

Family Deities

Moving to the family level there is a surprising prominence given to what might be called family deities or gods associated with particular ancestors. This finds a well-known parallel in the so-called "God of the Fathers" (θεὸς πατρῷος) in the Hebrew Bible, where the Israelite god is frequently called "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob", though it is obvious from the context that Yahweh is meant (e.g. Gen. 28:13;). This feature, interpreted as reflecting a nomadic or semi-nomadic background, was first extensively discussed in a classic work by Albrecht Alt (1966). Alt (following a hint by Nöldeke in Euting 1885, 62-63) discussed the Nabataean material at great length, seeing the settling of the Nabataeans as parallel to the much earlier settling of the Israelites.

The analogy is striking since in a number of Nabataean inscriptions and Greek inscriptions from a Nabataean or related context we find reference to a divine recipient of a dedication designated "the god of so-and-so". For example: *ʾlh wʾlw* (*RES* §1434); *ʾlh ḥṭyšw* (*CIS* II,

354); *ʾlh mʿynw* (*RES* §2053); *ʾlh mtnw* (*RES* §2051); *ʾlh qṣyw* (*CIS* II, 174); *ʾlh šʿydw* (*CIS* II, 176); *ʾlh tymw* (JS I, no. 59); *ʾlh nšw* (Naveh 1979, 112-13: no. 3-4). Slightly more doubtful, because the noun-form may imply a place-name rather than a personal name is *ʾlh mnbtw* in *RES* §1432. There is one instance of a goddess being identified in the same way, on a small relief with female facial markings found in the so-called Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra: *ʾlht ḥyn br nybt*, "the goddess of Ḥayyan son of Naybat" (Hammond 1981; Plate IVa).

These titles are to be understood as associating the current cult with a protective deity associated with a particular family ancestor. In one case in Nabataean, one which happens to mention the grandfather of the dedicants, the grandfather has the same name as the ancestor after whom the god is named: he is the person who first became a devotee of the deity in question (*CIS* II, 354). In another case, an inscription from Simj in the Ḥawrān, the god is linked with a whole tribe, *ʾl qṣyw* (Littmann 1914, 12-14, no. 11): *dnh ʿbd ʾl [q]ṣyw lʾlhhm bʿl[šmn]*. This moves us onto a yet higher social plane, that of the tribe rather than simply the family. This is one step away from a state cult.

In some, but not all of the cases listed above the text actually mentions the name of the deity concerned. Thus *ʾlh mʿynw* is Ashad or, more probably, Ashar; *ʾlh mtnw* and *ʾlh šʿydw* is in each case Baalshamin; *ʾlh nšw* is Tāʾ. *ʾlh wʾlw* appears to be qualified as "the great god", while *ʾlh ḥṭyšw* is identified, possibly but not certainly, as *dwtrʾ* (Milik 1959, 559-60; Healey 1993, 141) and the following phrase, *dy bṣhwt pṭmwn*, refers to some other place, not the location of the inscription, perhaps some family chapel, in which the deity was venerated (v. Dijkstra 1995, 57-60).

Greek titles of this kind, mostly from the Ḥawrān, include θεὸς Ἀμέρου, θεὸς Ἀρκεσιλάου, θεὸς Αὔμου, etc. (Alt 1966, 71-76), sometimes using the Greek phrase θεὸς πατρῷος, while *gd*, "Fortune, Tyche", sometimes takes the place of *ʾlh* in Safaitic and Palmyrene. The element of elaboration implied in the Nabataean cases where Baalshamin is named — the identification of a family god with one of the high gods — is evident in Greek examples in which θεὸς Αὔμου is qualified with the title ἀνίκητος, "unconquered", normally reserved for Helios (see on Dushara in Chapter IV).

City Deities: Tyches, Ṣaʿbu and the Gad of the Nabataeans

A number of figurative representations of deities have been interpreted as Tyche figures, i.e. protective deities of particular cities or peoples. Thus the "Isis" figure on the Khazneh has been so understood (Lyttleton 1990, 21-22), and figures from the temple at Tannūr also. Tyches are discussed in the Ḥawrān context by Sourdel (1952, 49-52; see also Augé 1990). *šʿyʿw* is the local deity of Sīʿ, the personification of divine blessing (Wenning and Merklein 1997, 106-07; *RES* § 1092; Sourdel 1952, 52), while the city of Bosra is personified in an inscription from Qaṭṭār ed-Deir at Petra: *mṣbʾ dy bṣrʾ* (Milik 1958, 248-49: no. 7; 1980, 115). Allāt may also have been regarded as the Tyche of Bosra (Sourdel 1952, 50).

The enigmatic god Ṣaʿbu or Ilāh-Ṣaʿbu (Milik 1972, 211-12) appears in several inscriptions, but most clearly in a temple dedication inscription recorded by Dalman at the foot of the el-Khubthah rock at Petra (Dalman 1912, 101-06: no. 92; *RES* §1434; re-read by Milik and Starcky 1970, 158; see also Dijkstra 1995, 61):

> *lʾlh ṣʿbw ʾlhʾ dy [b]ʾṣl ḥbtʾ*
>
> to Ilāh-Ṣaʿbu, the god who is in the territory (?*ʾṣlʾ*) of Khubthah.

According to the re-reading of the text its date would be shortly before A.D. 86 and it was written by someone from Suweidah in the Ḥawrān. It is very difficult to determine a meaning for *ʾṣl* and Milik does not translate it, but what must be the same word appears in *CIS* II, 350 (see Cantineau 1930-32, I, 64; *DNSWI*, 99).

There is also a Palmyrene inscription (*CIS* II, 3991) recording a dedication to

> *ʾlh ṣʿbw dy mqrʾ gd ʾnbṭ ʿl ḥywh...,*
>
> Ilāh-Ṣaʿbu, who is called Gad of the Nabataeans, for the life of ....,

and a possible allusion to the deity in the third line of an inscription in Ḥegra reassembled and republished by Milik and Starcky (1970, 158 no. 111; earlier *RES* § 1169; see also Dijkstra 1995, 69-70). This may contain a dedication of a stele (*msgdʾ*) *lʾlh ṣ]ʿbw* followed probably by *ʾlh[ʾ*. We must also add an unpublished Hismaic inscription from Uraynibah which may also refer to "the god Ṣaʿb", but again the immediate epigraphic context is not quite clear (text to be published by Graf and Zwettler — personal communication).

Until clearer evidence is forthcoming we suspend judgement on whether there really was a deity called Ṣaʿbu. In *ʾlh ṣʿbw* Ṣaʿbu could be the name of a place, which would suit the context, or a personal name, since the personal name Ṣaʿbu occurs a number of times (Negev 1991a, no. 1001). It would be odd, though, to have this person turning up in Petra, Ḥegra and Palmyra! It is clear that if this god Ṣaʿbu was known as "the Gad of the Nabataeans", he must have been very important.

State Deities: the God of the King

A sub-group of the family god titles ("the god of PN"), those in which the person referred to is one of the Nabataean kings, brings us finally to the state level. Here the formula is *ʾlh mrʾnʾ*, "god of our Lord", followed by the name of Aretas (H 11; 28; 36) or Rabel (*RES* §83; 2036). Sometimes the texts speak directly of *ʾlh rbʾl* (*CIS* II, 218; Milik 1958, 231-35; Dijkstra 1995, 312-13; in *CIS* II, 350 no king is mentioned). Dushara may be explicitly identified as the deity involved (Starcky 1985, 181), and the use of the title *ʾlh rbʾl* (*CIS* II, 218; Milik 1958, 231-5; Starcky 1985, 181) may allude to Aʿra (Dijkstra 1995, 310-14). *ʾlh mnkw* in an inscription published by Khairy (1981, with additional note by Milik) may refer to one of the kings of this name, though this *mnkw* might be a private individual. Here the title is possibly (Milik) attached to the name of Baalshamin (Dijkstra 1995, 55-57). Perhaps indicative of a religious reform gathering the deities into a state cult is the inscription at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh which lists the gods and describes them as *ʾlhy mrʾnʾ*, "gods of our lord (the king)" (Savignac 1934, 576-77: no. 19).

While the structure here is similar to that for the god of the fathers, the context is very different. Here we are dealing with a dynastic state cult, not with personal or family religion, though the basic concept of a deity who is identified with a family is probably the same. In these cases the family deity has become the national god, or is identified with the national god, since in these cases Dushara, Aʿra or Dushara-Aʿra is specifically named.

Although, as we have seen, the god in question is not always Dushara, *brkt dwšrʾ* on a coin of Obodas III in 16 B.C. indicates a close association between Dushara and the royal house of Nabataea (Schmitt-Korte 1990a, 110).

CHAPTER SIX

IMAGES AND RITUALS

Objects of Worship

Cult-niches and Images of Gods

Cult-niches and steles are a common feature of Nabataean sites (Starcky 1966, cols. 1008-10; Patrich 1990a, 50-113). They are very numerous at Petra and in the Jabal Ithlib area of Ḥegra. Many niches contain plain stone pillars or betyls carved out of the rock and often probably representing Dushara, sometimes with one, two or even three additional pillars representing the deities associated with him. It is clear from the inscription accompanying two betylic figures of this kind at Ramm that al-ᶜUzzā and al-Kutbā are being represented in that case (Patrich 1990a, 101-02, fig. 7; Plate XV upper). While it is reasonable to assume that each betyl represents a different deity, some coin depictions of three steles are accompanied by the name of Dushara only. Thus identifying the gods represented is often very difficult: Krone (1992, 139) thinks the three pillars in some niches could represent Allāt, Manāt and al-ᶜUzzā and the two in other niches Allāt and Dushara or Allāt and al-ᶜUzzā, while Niehr (1998, 221) regards the larger betyl of pairs as Allāt and the smaller as Dushara. In accordance with our suggested identification of Allāt and al-ᶜUzzā as a single deity, we are not inclined to accept that both were depicted side by side. The essential concept of the niche is, however, clear: it is a miniature temple or *adyton* of a temple (Zayadine 1989, 113).

The use of the betyl, usually without any facial markings, is typical of the Nabataeans. It reflects a reluctance, shared, notably with the Jews and the later Muslim Arabs, to make images of a god in human form (see Patrich 1990a, passim, and for comparisons with Judaism and Islam 185-91). The god himself, being spiritual, could not be portrayed. There is even some slight evidence of Nabataean iconoclasm (Patrich 1990a, 153-7). Different types of betyl may be distinguished: those carved in relief and those which are free-standing and could be carried around in processions (Niehr 1998, 226-27). A surviving relief may depict an idol being transported (Dalman 1908, 109-10; see

Wenning forthcoming). The base or throne (*mwtbʾ*) on which the stele sat was worshipped as a distinct object of veneration (Patrich 1990a, 58-9, 91-2).

A standard concession to depicting the gods in human form is found in the particular type of betyl known as an "eye-idol". This has schematic squares to indicate eyes and, more rarely, a vertical line to indicate the nose. The eyes are sometimes stellar in character and association with inscriptions suggests that the goddesses Atargatis and al-ʿUzzā, especially the latter, were depicted specifically in this way (Patrich 1990a, 82-86). This, it may be recalled, is one of the reasons to support the thesis that al-Kutbā is female — the deity is depicted with star-like eyes in the double betyl at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh. However, a possible Dushara betyl with eyes is to be published by K. Schmitt-Korte (Merklein and Wenning 1998b, 84). A detailed typology of steles or betyls is drawn up by Patrich (1990a, 75-91; Merklein and Wenning 1998).

There are pre-Nabataean examples of this type of betyl from Taymāʾ (al-Theeb 1993, 276-79; Beyer and Livingstone 1987, 294; Anonymous 1975, plate 67) and it is evident that the Nabataean favouring of betyls is connected with the north Arabian roots of some aspects of Nabataean culture (Hübner and Weber 1997, 116). The Arabic term for these steles is *nuṣub* or *nuṣb* (plural *anṣāb*), which are, of course, connected etymologically with the Hebrew *maṣṣēbah.* In Nabataean *nṣybʾ*, *nṣbtʾ*, and *mṣbʾ* are all attested. The first is found in an inscription from el-Khubthah beside a niche: *ʾlh nṣyby ʾlʿzʾ wmrʾ bytʾ*, "these are the betyls of al-ʿUzzā and the Lord of the Temple" (*RES* § 1088). The second appears in an inscription beside a niche at ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh: *nṣbt ʾlt ʾlht[ʾ*, "betyl of the goddess Allāt" (Milik 1958, 247). *mṣbʾ* is found in an inscription from Qaṭṭār ed-Deir at Petra, where the reference is to the betyl of the deified city of Bosra or its Tyche (Milik 1958, 246-49: no. 7). The basic meaning of these words appears to be "erected stone monument" and they most often refer to steles or betyls representing deities. Unfortunately none of the Nabataean inscriptions relate the term specifically to any of the known temples, so we cannot be sure whether one of these words was used for the main object of worship in a temple.

Where statues existed, the term *ṣlmʾ* would have been used (see Arabic *ṣanam*). Thus it is used of the statue of the divine ʿObodat in *CIS* II, 354, and the feminine form, *ṣlmtʾ*, is used of the Tyche of Sīʿ in the bilingual mentioning her (*RES* § 1092). Nabataean thus seems to have the same linguistic feature found in Palmyrene and Old Syriac of using the feminine form for statues of females (Hillers and Cussini 1996, 403; Drijvers and Healey 1999, 57-58). However, scholars (Dalman 1908, 55 and 1912, 101; Mettinger 1995, 60, n. 15; Dijkstra 1995, 54) are right to reject the restoration of *CIS* II, 442 found in *CIS* itself, which suggests the inscription is referring to a statue of Dushara (restored *ṣlm dwšrʾ*). The reference is probably to a sanctuary rather than a statue.

Under Greco-Roman influence statues of gods were produced (Glueck 1965, with special reference to Khirbet Tannūr; Patrich 1990a, 104-13). Fragments of a marble statue have been recovered from the *adyton* of the Qaṣr el-Bint temple. We may also note the fact that terracotta statuettes were made, in some cases representing deities and reflecting personal piety (Niehr 1998, 222). Parlasca et al. (1997, 126-31) identify terracotta figures of al-ʿUzzā, Dushara and Isis (127-28: figs 139, 141-42). Isis, of course, was a foreign deity and it is to be expected that she is represented in the Egyptian/Roman way. Perhaps more surprising is the fact that Atargatis is Nabataeanized and represented by an eye-idol (Plate VIIb). The medallion and betyl published by Hammond (1968; see Plate IVb) is an interesting transitional case: Dushara is *doubly* represented by a stele and a face (Patrich 1990a, 106-07). Attachment to the cult of steles was deeply rooted and it was not, in fact, replaced when statues were introduced: aniconism was a central aspect of Nabataean religious belief (Patrich 1990a, 166).

The cult of stones and steles is a well-known feature of Arabian religion (Wellhausen 1897^{2}, 105-06; Lammens 1928, 101-79; Henninger 1981, 6-8, 12-13). The stones were regarded as the container of the god (Dussaud 1955, 41 n.3). Roman and other authors remark on the Arabians' unhewn stones and bloody sacrifices: so Herodian (V.5.3-10) refers to the introduction of the Emesan Elagabalus cult to Rome, and Maximus of Tyre (b. c. A.D. 120-25) reports: "The Arabians revere a god, but which god I know not; their image, which I have seen, was a square stone" (*Dissertationes* 2.8; trans. Trapp 1997, 21-22; Greek text ed. Trapp 1994). It may be noted, however, that the worship of stones was not unknown in Greece, as we know from Pausanias (late 2nd century A.D. — e.g. *Description of Greece* III (Laconia) xxii.1; IX (Boeotia) xxvii.1: see Moutsopoulos 1990, 56-57 and Greek 64-65).

The betyl could also be hypostasized, as we see in a dedication to Zeus Betylos at 3rd century A.D. Dura-Europos (Teixidor 1977, 87): θεῷ πατρῴῳ Διὶ βετύλῳ (Milik 1967, 568) and βαίτυλος is named as a brother of El-Chronos, Dagon and Atlas in Philo of Byblos (ed. and trans. Attridge and Oden 1981, 48-49, discussion 87 [differing views on the Semitic origin of the word βαίτυλος; see also Tümpel 1896 and Cook 1940, 907-20]).

We have already noted in connection with Dushara the fact that Dushara-Aʿra was worshipped as a stone, as we know from coins and from the oft-quoted passage in the *Suda* (ed. Adler 1931, 713, partly following Patrich 1990a, 51):

> Theus-Ares: this is the god Ares in Petra of Arabia. The god Ares is worshipped among them, for they honour him especially. The image is a black stone, square, unshaped, four feet high, two wide. It is placed on a gold-plated base. To this they sacrifice and pour out the blood of sacrificial victims. This is for them the libation. The whole building is rich in gold and there are many dedications.

The mwtbʾ *and Altars*

A separate object of worship was Dushara's *mwtbʾ* (probably *mōtᵉbā* by analogy with the Jewish Aramaic vocalization), as we can see in H 16:4 (*dwšrʾ wmwtbh*) and in the Turkmāniyyeh inscription (line 3: *dwšrʾ ʾlh mrʾnʾ wmwtbh ḥryš*; 4: *dwšrʾ wmwtbh*) (for details see Healey 1993, 156-58, and generally Will 1986). Some early commentators assumed *mwtbʾ* was a divine name. Others thought that it was not a divine name but connected it with Aramaic מיתב meaning "seat, throne". Clermont-Ganneau (1898b, 131; 1901d), while accepting this basic etymology, originally suggested interpreting the word as "she who is seated", Dushara's Πάρεδρος. This is impossible in the Turkmāniyyeh inscription, where the accompanying adjective, *ḥryšʾ* (line 3), is masculine. Some sought the specific meaning "spouse" (*RES* § 1099) for *mwtbʾ*, with the spouse of Dushara called Ḥarīsha, but the suggested etymology is extremely improbable.

Connection with "sitting" is overwhelmingly likely and hence "his throne". Structurally we may compare *dwšrʾ wmwtbh* with *mnwtw wqyšh* (H 8:5) and with *ʾlt wwgrh*, "Allāt and her niche/stele/idol" in an inscription from Ṣalkhad dated A.D. 94/5 (Milik 1958, 227-31, no. 1:2). Enthroned deities appear frequently in iconography (Pritchard 1954, no. 529, 512ff.) and the throne of a deity could be an object of veneration alongside the god himself. Patrich (1990a, 50-51) draws attention to this important aspect of Nabataean worship, also reflected in the *Suda* passage cited above (ed. Adler 1931, 713), describing the idol of Dushara on a golden base. We cannot assume that this late source preserves authentic detail, though it clearly confirms the aniconic character of some aspects of Nabataean religion which is reflected in the worship of the ubiquitous stone-carved blocks, mostly without figurative treatment, while referring also to the gold-plated base (Nabataean *mwtbʾ*) on which it was placed.

There remains the question of the word *ḥryšʾ* which accompanies *mwtbh* in the Turkmāniyyeh inscription, though not in H 16. It is not a personal name, nor can it be an adjective accompanying a feminine name or noun meaning "wife". It is probably a masculine adjective meaning "protected, holy" (see Dussaud 1955, 41 n. 4 and most recently *DNWSI*, 408), though the etymology remains obscure.

The Nabataean betyls of Petra, Ḥegra and the Ḥawrān often stood on bases (Teixidor 1977, 87; Starcky 1966, cols. 1008-10), but identifying the *mwtbʾ* as an object in any of the temple structures is not easy. We have noted prominent *podia* in the central *cella* at Dharīḥ and the Qaṣr el-Bint at Petra, while there is also a clear *podium* at the Madhbaḥ high-place. In some cases, as we have noted, it is possible to walk around the *podium* (e.g. at the open-air altar in the Jabal Ithlib at Ḥegra: Wenning 1996, 259-60; Augé 1999, 43).

The distinct base under a stele or altar is most clearly preserved in visible form on coins such as late coins of Adraa (Patrich 1990a, 70-71) and on rock-drawings (Patrich 1990a, 93). In some of these depictions it is also clear that the altar, sometimes a horned altar, *represents* the deity (Patrich 1990a, 92-93, fig. 31). The idea of divinizing and giving distinct cult to the altar (Teixidor 1977, 86-87; Clermont-Ganneau 1901b; 1906a) is reflected also in a series of Greek inscriptions from Syria of late 1st and 2nd century date dedicated to Διὶ Μαδβάχῳ καὶ Σελαμάνει πατρῴοις θεοῖς, "to Zeus Madbachos and Selamanes, ancestral gods", and Διὶ Βωμῷ μεγάλῳ ἐπηκόῳ, "to the great Zeus-Altar, hearer of prayers" (Prentice 1908, 104-26 and 67-70). Zeus Bomos is clearly a proper Greek version of the Semitic Zeus Madbachos (cf. Aramaic *madb*^{e}*ḥā*, "altar"). Greek βωμός appears as *bwms* in a Nabataean inscription from Sīʿ (*RES* § 2117). The same idea may be reflected in the appearance of *msgdʾ* as a divine name in Elephantine (Cowley 1923, 147-48: no. 44:3) and the deity Turmasgada in a wide range of inscriptions from the Roman world and Dura-Europos (see Milik 1967, 578-80). Porphyry reports on this at Dūmah: "The Dumatians used to sacrifice each year a boy; they buried him under the altar which they used as a divine statue" (*De Abstinentia*, ii, 56, 6; edd. and trans. Bouffartigue and Patillon 1979).

Sacred Times and Persons

Festivals

Unfortunately none of the inscriptions or literary sources give us much clue about regularly recurring festivals. Hammond mentions the prominence of the months of Nisan, Ab and Tishri as indicative of special festivals and sacrifices (1973, 104). However, this impression of prominence seems to be an illusion. The majority of month-names occur in Ḥegran tomb inscriptions and the predominance of Nisan in these is clear and may be significant, but probably not in relation to sacrifices or festivals. It may rather suggest a preference for this month in the dedication of tombs (Healey 1993, 105). When the tomb inscriptions are set aside we are left with only a handful of inscriptions with months mentioned. Ab is only marginally more popular than Nisan, Iyyar and the other months (judging by the data of Cantineau 1932: month-names are not included in *DNWSI*).

Perhaps more significant is the dating of two of the Dushara-Aʿra inscriptions (*RES* § 676; JS I, 204-06: no. 39) to Nisan. Sourdel (1952, 109-11) saw this as indicative of a common spring festival, with another possible festal season later in the year (Ab to Tishri). There is also the calendrical information provided by the zodiac from Tannūr (Plate XIIIb). This zodiac figure has an unusual order, with Aries to Virgo forming one series counter-clockwise and Libra to Pisces forming another clockwise. Glueck (1937, 14; 1952; 1965, 413-15; see also Homès-Fredericq 1980, 90-91) interpreted this to indicate two New Year festivals, one in the spring and one in the autumn. The importance of Nisan (April/Aries) in the tomb inscriptions might then be taken to indicate some special ceremonies in relation to the dead in that month because it was the beginning of the year.

We also have the literary evidence already cited from Epiphanius of a solstice festival held in the main cities of Nabataea in the post-Nabataean period (*Panarion* 51, 22, 11). There are widespread traditions of similar winter solstice cults (see, e.g., Cumont 1918, 210-12).

Clermont-Ganneau (1901c; 1901e) claimed also to find evidence of a sabbatical or jubilee year system in a post-Nabataean Sinai inscription (possibly every four years), though the evidence is slight and the inscription uncertain (*CIS* II, 964). Again from the post-Nabataean period comes the slight evidence of cyclical celebrations at Bosra in the *Actia Dousaria* (Ἄκτια Δουσάρια) there in the 3rd century A.D. and evidenced on coins (Sartre 1985, 156-58). As noted above we do not know whether this event has an earlier history, though there may well have been an early Dushara-Aʿra festival which was reshaped in the third century. The post-Nabataean panegyriarch, "president of festal gatherings" (πανηγυριάρχης) from Derʿā, mentioned in an inscription in the Sīq at Petra, could be associated with such a festival (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904, I, 223-24: no. 60, 11; Dalman 1908, 145-47: nos 149 and 154).

To judge from the evidence of pre-Islamic northern Arabia, annual spring festivals are likely to have been held, with aspects of pilgrimage attached (Wellhausen 1897^2, 79-101; Henninger 1981, 13-14). Petra may have been a centre of pilgrimage and this may explain the variety of exotic cults there (Knauf 1998). Particularly interesting is a Greek inscription from Udhruḥ (2nd-3rd century) referring to gods brought to Petra, and the Sīq with its camel-procession may be related to this (Knauf 1998, 95-96). Tannūr may have been a centre of pilgrimage, possibly even a national shrine (with Dharīḥ a stopping point on a pilgrim route) (Ball 2000, 350). It may be noted also that Diodorus Siculus refers to annual gatherings of the Arabs/Nabataeans (XIX, 95.1-2), while Jerome (*PL* xxiii, 42 §§ 26-27) mentions an annual gathering at Elusa.

Ritual Action: Offerings

Niehr (1998, 227-28) suggests offerings of incense, animals (including camels), wine and oil. Of these only incense and wine (libations were probably of wine) are supported by direct evidence. In connection with Dushara we have noted inscriptions from Pozzuoli near Naples which include a marble plaque, probably dated A.D. 11, recording an offering of two camels to Dushara (*CIS* II, 157). There is doubt as to whether the camels referred to were live animals for sacrifice or clay models (see discussion of Lacerenza 1988-89, 142-44). The latter seems much more likely (Turcan 1996, 186, against Tram Tan Tinh 1972, 143-44), and note may be made of the terracotta models of camels found at Petra and elsewhere, which may be interpreted as votive offerings (Parlasca 1986, especially 210; Parlasca et al. 1997, 129-30, fig. 130). On the other hand note may be made of a relief from near the Deir at Petra in which two camels are led to a betyl by worshippers (Dalman 1908, 276, no. 464; Lindner et al. 1984, 174 and fig. 10). These could be being led to sacrifice. The *Suda*, quoted earlier

(Adler 1931, 713; Patrich 1990a, 51) refers to ritual action of pouring out the blood of sacrificial victims as a libation (see also Vattioni 1987).

Much has sometimes been made of references to human sacrifice in Arabia in Greek sources (Wellhausen 1897^{2}, 115), but none of these, even if reliable, can be specifically connected with the Nabataeans. Most quoted is a report of Porphyry (c. A.D. 232-303) in his *De Abstinentia*, ii, 56, 6 (edd. and trans. Bouffartigue and Patillon 1979) already cited, where the reference is to Dūmah:

> καὶ Δουματηνοὶ δὲ τῆς Ἀραβίας κατ᾽ ἔτος ἕκαστον ἔθυον παῖδα, ὃν ὑπὸ βωμὸν ἔθαπτον, ᾧ χρωνται ὡς ξοάνῳ
>
> The Dumatians used to sacrifice each year a boy; they buried him under the altar which they used as a divine statue.

More direct, though concerned with the Lihyanites of Dedan rather than with the Nabataeans, is a Lihyanite inscription from al-ʿUlā which refers to the dedication of a boy to Dhū-Ghābat: this could be interpreted to refer to human sacrifice, but it does not have to be so interpreted, and the word in the inscription which might point in this direction is disputed (JS II, 379-86, Lih. no. 49, with discussion).

It is Strabo who, partly confirming the report in the *Suda*, tells us about the libations and incense-offerings of the Nabataeans: (16. 4. 26; trans. adapted from Jones 1930, 368-69):

> ἥλιον τιμῶσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος ἱδρυσάμενοι βωμόν, σπένδοντες ἐν αὐτῷ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν καὶ λιβανωτίζοντες.
>
> They worship the sun, building an altar on the top of the house, and pouring libations on it daily and burning frankincense.

This could refer to the roofs of temples, several of which are provided with stairs to upper storeys. Niehr (1998, 227-28) also notes the offering of silver and gold implied in a legal inscription from the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra: the text refers to the rules governing the behaviour of priests with regard to these offerings (Hammond et al. 1986; Jones 1989):

> *mh dy yʾtʾ lh mn ksp wdhb wqrbwn wzwn klh wmn kspʾ wnḥ[šʾ* ...
> *wlkmryʾ plgʾ ʾḥrnʾ* ...
>
> Whatever he receives of silver or gold or offerings or provisions of any kind, or of silver (coinage) or bronze (coinage) ... and the other half (will be allotted) to the priests ...

It is not, however, clear whether the silver and gold are offerings directly to the deity or tithes.

The fact that many Nabataean "altars" or cult-*podia* could be circumambulated suggests that circumambulation might have played a part in the cult of some temples at least. This is made more plausible because of the role that circumambulation clearly had in pre-Islamic and in Islamic worship. The Arabic technical term is *ṭawāf* (Wellhausen 1897^2, 109-12; Ryckmans 1951^2, 10; Mettinger 1995, 71). Some caution is necessary, however. One of the supposed circumambulatory structures, that of the *cella* of the Winged Lions temple at Petra, is arguably too narrow for ritual circumambulation and there is certainly no Nabataean evidence to suggest *ṭawāf* carried out by large numbers of worshippers inside or outside a temple.

Finally, rituals with musicians are suggested by terracotta statuettes (Zayadine 1991b, 55: fig. 60; Parlasca et al. 1997, 128-29, fig. 143) and again by Strabo, who refers (not in a specifically cultic context) to the fact that at the Nabataeans' common meals "they have two girl-singers for each banquet" (*Geography* 16. 4. 26).

Personnel

There is little evidence of cult personnel. To judge from the slight evidence from pre-Islamic Arabia, custody of sanctuaries was probably familial (Henninger 1981, 5) and there may have been no sacrificial priesthood. The *sādin* is the guardian of a sanctuary (Wellhausen 1897^2, 130-40). For the Nabataeans Niehr (1998, 225) distinguishes temples which had priesthoods and other, open-air sanctuaries which did not (though it should be noted that much open-air cult, such as at the high-places, was just as official as the temple cult and must have had priests). In any case the Nabataeans seem to have had a more complex set-up, possibly with northern influences. For example, for Allāt at Ramm we have evidence of the *khnʾ*, also frequent in Sinai and possibly of Arab background like the pre-Islamic *kāhin* (Savignac 1932, 591-93: no. 2), and the *ʾpklʾ* (Savignac 1933, 411-12: no. 2), with a *kmrʾ* of the same goddess attested at Ḥebrān (*CIS* II, 170). For al-ʿUzzā in Sinai we have the *khnʾ* (*CIS* II, 611) and she also had officials called *ʿlym* (Milik and Starcky 1975, 124-26, no. 6, pl. xlvi). A variety of sacerdotal figures appear in Sinai inscriptions (Díez Merino 1969, 275; Negev 1977b, 229).

I. Parlasca (Parlasca et al. 1997, 129-30, fig. 144) has convincingly identified a terracotta figure as representing a priest. The 12 cm-high figure has a full beard and a pointed cap. He holds his hands to his face, perhaps in an imprecatory gesture or in venerating the deity. There may be an echo of this gesture of prayer in the slight evidence of anthropomorphic renderings of floral designs on some pottery (Patrich 1990a, 127-29, fig. 43).

One of the types of priest, the *ʾpklʾ*, is found also in Ḥegran texts as the head of the local religious establishment in particular areas (H 16:8; Starcky 1966, col. 1014). This is a term found also in Mesopotamia, South Arabia and in Lihyanite (Arabian evidence: JS II, 384-86; Fahd 1966, 102-04). It seems to refer originally to some kind of "exorcist". Teixidor (1966, 91-93) noted that this title can be associated with rulership, appearing as a joint title with *mryʾ* in Hatra (Vattioni 1981: 46: no. 67), and that the same association is found in the first Tell esh-Shuqāfiyyeh inscription (Strugnell 1959, 31-32). We have also noted earlier the term *bytyʾ*, used in Sinai as a term for a temple official (*DNWSI*, 163; Cantineau 1932, 71: *CIS* II, 1814, 1969, 2068, 2514, 2648, 2845), parallel with the Greek διοικητής and οἰκονόμος (Díez Merino 1969, 274-75; Negev 1977b, 229; for Greek inscriptions see Waddington 1968, nos. 2463, 2547, etc.).

A quite unusual document is provided by the very damaged text from the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra quoted earlier. This refers to taxes on offerings paid to the temple officials and possible misuse of these resources (Hammond et al. 1986, 77-78; Jones 1989). There are interesting parallels in Jerusalem and Hatra for the setting up in public of religious rules. There is much that is uncertain in this inscription, but the implication seems to be that the priests (*kmryʾ*) received a certain proportion of the income of the temple. It is not clear whether the gold, silver, etc. were conceived of as offerings to the deity or as tithes.

Another title found in the Ḥegra tomb texts is *ptwrʾ* (H 29:1) which might mean "diviner", perhaps a military augur advising on campaigns on the basis of entrails, dreams and astrology. The same title is found in a Petra inscription bearing a dedication to Aretas IV (Parr 1967-68; Starcky and Strugnell 1966, 236-44: I). In Sinai we also find the title *mbqrʾ*, literally "examiner": he may have examined sacrificial victims (Negev 1977b, 229). The supposition that the Nabataeans used augury is confirmed by the fact reported by Josephus (*Antiquities* XVIII.125) that in A.D. 37 Aretas IV had divination carried out by οἰωνοσκοπία — by observing the flight of birds (though the term can in fact refer to augury in general: LS, 1211). It may be noted that Cicero, *De Divinatione* I.xli.92, reports that divination by the flight of birds was practised by the Arabs and the practice is known also in early Islamic times (Fahd 1961; 1966, 432-50).

With one possible exception we know nothing more of Nabataean mantic and magical practices. The exception is an obscure, probably Nabataean incantation or counter-spell on a pebble found near Beersheba and dated c. 100 B.C. (Naveh 1979). The script is early cursive Nabataean, but Naveh expressed some doubt about whether the author was a Nabataean. The difficulties of interpretation appear almost insuperable, but it is fairly clear that the text is a counter-spell (technical term *pšrʾ*) in which five female spirits are invoked (*pšrtʾ*), represented by five statuettes (*ṣlmnytʾ*). Some fire ritual seems to be involved, a *ḥmnʾ* (see Chapter III) and a god called Tāʾ. Naveh's very tentative translation may be quoted (with minor modifications):

> O Spirit, the smoke [of] the *ḥenna*! O Aʿattars! Let it be known that here is our steadfastness; The *ḥmnʾ* with (its) wings is guarantor for it. Make clear for Tāʾ, the god of Nashu, the accomplishment of the vow with the profusion of closed flowers and sprouting. And these are the disenchantresses: Tinshar daughter of El, Tipshar daughter of Tinshar, Aʿaṣaṣ daughter of Shamash, Ḥargol daughter of El, Shebaṭbaṭa daughter of El — the female statuettes. Release (O Spirit), release a man, free (hm) from (the spell of) a woman! You (disenchantresses) brought wood for a counter-charm. (So, O Spirit,) explain to him the spark!

We also know that curses were important to Nabataeans: they formed a major element of the formulary of the tomb inscriptions (below). Despite the legalistic context, this suggests a strong tradition of curses in popular tradition, as all relevant comparative data suggests. There is no doubt that the general ancient Near Eastern tradition of curses arises from popular belief and practice. The whole tradition was reviewed comprehensively by Parrot (1939).

Private Cults

The marzēḥā *and the* triclinium

It is clear both from archaeological and from epigraphic evidence that ritual meals held by members of a voluntary guild or society were a very important aspect of Nabataean religion. The Nabataean term for this institution is *marzēḥā* and its rituals are associated with *triclinia*, banquet rooms with three benches (also *biclinia* with two benches only and round *stibadia*). The Nabataean evidence is clear but it can be filled out by reference to Palmyra and to a long earlier history behind these practices, traces of which can be found in the Hebrew Bible (Amos 6: 7; Jer. 16: 5: the term used is מַרְזֵחַ) and even earlier in the Ugaritic texts (*mrzḥ*) (Eissfeldt 1969; Starcky 1966, 1014-15; Milik 1972, especially 107-208; Tarrier 1995; Niehr 1998, 228-29). In the Greek world we find the θίασος in a similar function as a religious gathering or club.

A very important new insight into the *marzēḥā* is provided by the report of a series of *mrzḥʾ* inscriptions, as yet unpublished, from el-Madras at Petra. These make it clear that the *thiasoi* would often consist of a professional or trade group such as soldiers or scribes or workmen. Two groups are made up of slaves (Nehmé 1997, 1047).

Large numbers of Nabataean *triclinia* (and fewer *biclinia* and *stibadia*) have survived, well over one hundred, many carved out of rock-faces, but some free-standing (as they are in Palmyra). They fall into several different types (Tarrier 1995). Many are domestic, and the function of these can be assumed to be non-religious. Others are connected with tombs and are funerary in character and a small number are directly connected with temples or cult-sites.

Those connected with tombs were almost certainly used in religious meals held in honour of the dead, commemorative rituals, presumably on some recurrent basis: annually or for a certain limited period after death. Tarrier (1995, 166, 178) has pointed to modern and pre-modern parallels to such rituals. We have noted the prime examples of the *triclinia* connected with the ʿUneishu tomb and the Roman Soldier tomb at Petra. The inscription of the Turkmāniyyeh tomb specifically states that there was a *triclinium* (*smkʾ*) attached (Healey 1993, 23-42). In passing, note the *marzēḥā* inscription from the Deir (*RES* § 1423), interpreted by Niehr (1998, 228) as specifically commemorating named dead, though this is not the obvious interpretation of the text. There is, in fact, no evidence of a direct connection between the *marzēḥā* and funerary rituals (Alavoine 2000).

The "free-standing" *triclinia* attached to temples are not numerous in the Nabataean realm. We have noted earlier the possible *triclinium* in one of the cells of the Qaṣr el-Bint temple at Petra. More certain are the *triclinia* identified at Tannūr and Dharīḥ. In the case of

Tannūr we can imagine that a practical necessity of caring for pilgrims was involved, but the fact that two of the *triclinia* lead off the main temple courtyard (in the same way that *triclinia* are incorporated into the Bel and Baalshamin temples at Palmyra) suggests they has a specific religious role. The Dīwān at Ḥegra, a *triclinium* carved out of rock, while not in a temple, is closely associated with a religious area, Jabal Ithlib (Plate Xa).

The drinking of wine is particularly associated with the *triclinium* rituals. It is in this context that the *marzēaḥ* was disapproved of in the biblical tradition and the connection with wine is evidenced archaeologically by the discovery of wine-vessels in *triclinia* both in Palmyra and Petra (Tarrier 1995, 171-73; Milik 1972, 108-09). The wine crater was called an *ʾgnʾ* both at Palmyra (Milik 1972, 108-09) and at Petra, where we have an inscription recording the dedication of an *ʾgnʾ* (*CIS* II, 423B, correctly read by Littmann 1914, 88). A Palmyrene inscription has the head of a *marzēḥā*-club providing good quality wine as part of his duties (Hillers and Cussini 1996, 318: PAT 2743). That this tradition existed in Petra is suggested by Strabo (*Geography* 16. 4. 26), who tells us of the Nabataeans that:

> They prepare common meals together in groups of thirteen persons; and they have two girl-singers for each banquet (συμπόσιον). The king holds many drinking-bouts in magnificent style, but no one drinks more than eleven cupfuls, each time using a different golden cup.

Strabo's allusion to singing may be reflected in some Nabataean inscriptions associated with *triclinia* (Tarrier 1995, 174-75). He uses the term συμπόσιον, "symposium", as do the Palmyrene Greek texts (Tarrier 1995, 172). It is not clear, however, from this passage in Strabo that a specific religious ritual is involved. It sounds more like a secular celebration.

Some of the Aramaic terminology of these rituals is also known to us. The Aramaic word for the *triclinium* itself appears to be *smkʾ* (Healey 1993, 240). It appears in the Turkmāniyyeh inscription, as well as in Palmyrene. The term *gnyʾ* in the Turkmāniyyeh inscription may mean "benches for lying down for a meal" (see Syriac ܡܓܢܝܐ) and be connected with the verbal root GNʾ, which is used in a similar banquet-ritual context at Hatra (Hatra inscription 408:6: Beyer 1998, 103; Dijkstra 1995, 205-08). The fraternity of participants which held the "symposium" was the *mrzḥʾ*. The *rb mrzḥʾ*, "head of the *marzēḥā*, symposiarch", is mentioned in a short memorial inscription from a probable *triclinium* at Beiḍa near Petra (Zayadine 1986b; 1976). From the Palmyrene inscription noted earlier we know that a symposiarch there could be appointed on a yearly basis (Hillers and Cussini 1996, 318: PAT 2743). The Beiḍa inscription (and others) point to the fact that sometimes the *marzēḥā* met in a special place well away from normal activity in the city.

Less certain is the term *mškbʾ*, essentially "place of rest". This is found on a rock-face in the central Jabal Ithlib at Ḥegra and it may refer to the locus of a *triclinium* ritual (JS I, 206: no. 40). Since there is no obviously related structure and no burial, it could, however, have a vaguer meaning.

We have seen *ʾtrʾ* in JS I, 213-16: no. 57:2, where the reference is clearly to the locus of a private cult and this is true also in the case of JS II, 223-24: no. 83 in the Jabal Ithlib at Ḥegra, this being a specifically religious area of the site with no tombs. In the early Nabataean inscription from Elusa, the reference is clearly to a religious location (A. Cowley in Woolley and Lawrence 1915, 145-46, generally on the site 93-107; Cantineau 1932, II, 43-44; Dijkstra 1995, 49). Finally we may note that the Aṣlaḥ inscription at Petra, over a niche and adjacent to rock-cut rooms, is interpreted by Zayadine as relating to a special cult (*RES* § 1432; Zayadine 1989, 115; Dijkstra 1995, 50-55; Merklein 1995, 109-15). If this interpretation is correct, it would indicate the use of the term *ṣryḥʾ* (also used for part of a tomb: Healey 1993, 182) for a *marzēḥā*-chamber. Since it is here dedicated to Dushara, it can hardly mean "tomb-chamber".

The *marzēḥā* might be dedicated to the worship of any of the gods. Thus an inscription from near the Deir at Petra refers to an individual and his companions (*ḥbrwhy*) as the *mrzḥ ʿbdt ʾlhʾ*, "the *marzēḥā* of ʿObodat the god" (*RES* §1423) and a commemoration of *marzēḥā* members *qdm kwtbʾ* in a Petra *triclinium* in the Wādī es-Siyyagh (Dalman 1908, no. 398) implies that Kūtbā was the object of devotion (Milik and Teixidor 1961, 23). While the object of the cult might be one of the main gods, the institution falls under the general heading of "private" religion, along with specialist cults like that of Isis, since it was a free choice to take part in such a sodality. There were also other such cult-associations which are not specifically connected with *triclinia* so far as we know. Thus an inscription in the Jabal Ithlib at Ḥegra may be related to one such cultic association, dedicated to Dushara under the name of *mrʾ bytʾ*, "Lord of the Temple" (JS I, 213-16: no. 57) and Wenning (1996, 260-66) interprets the whole of the

Jabal Ithlib as a centre for a variety of *marzēḥā*-type cults. Also from outside the city of ʿAvdat come a small group of *marzēḥā* inscriptions on stone troughs or vessels (Naveh 1967, 187-88, re-reading Negev 1961 and 1963). The vessels are dedicated by a *rb mrzḥʾ* and *ḥbrwhy*, “his companions”, the *bny mrzḥʾ*, “members of the *marzēḥā*”. There may also be a reference to Dushara as the focus of this sodality (Negev 1963, 113-17: no. 10), though the reading is very uncertain.

Tombs and the Dead

Nabataean tombs vary in design, both interior and exterior. The sophistication, especially of exterior design, may reflect social differences between owners (Negev 1976a; McKenzie 1990, 115; Niehr 1998, 230-31). The basic distinction is that between earth- and rock-cut tombs. The former were cheaper and employed by lower social groups. The rock-cut tombs with façades fall also into social groupings, the most elaborate being the royal tombs (for typology: Schmidt-Colinet et al. 1997; Patrich 1990a, 114-23). These tombs were regarded as *houses* of the dead (*byt ʿlmʾ*) and the concept of feeding the dead follows naturally from this homely concept. At the other extreme is the *npšʾ*, the pyramidal symbolic representation of the dead person.

At Ḥegra vases are commonly carved over doorways of tombs. Human figures never appear, as they do occasionally at Petra, but there are frequently eagles, serpents, sphinxes, griffins and other semi-mythological and demonic creatures (often just faces), as well as rosettes, solar discs, etc. The significance of the eagles (all damaged) positioned over doorways is debatable, though the eagle probably represents the sun or the god Dushara as protector of the tomb’s inviolability (Plate VIIIb). We can assume the same role for the demonic figures. The façades may have been partly painted, plastered or otherwise adorned.

The insides of the tombs, which are not nearly as fine as the outsides, can be very complicated. Tomb A 3 at Ḥegra, for example, contains fifty-three places for burials (JS I, 359). Some of these *loculi* may have been added in the post-Nabataean period, while the smaller ones could have been meant for children, or even for collecting together the bones to make more room. This would imply the practice of secondary burial, a point of contact between Nabataean funerary practices and those of contemporary Judaism (Negev 1986, 71-84; see also Meyers 1971). Also contemporary Jewish inscriptions often contain similar phraseology to that of the Nabataean texts, such as reference to opening the tomb "over" the body of the deceased (H 13:2, with discussion in Healey 1993).

We know from Petra that tombs could have other installations attached to them: rooms for memorial banquets, gardens, etc. The Turkmāniyyeh tomb inscription gives details of such installations (see Chapter III), while the so-called Urn tomb and the tomb of ʿUneishu have buildings clearly attached, including *triclinia*. From the Turkmāniyyeh tomb and because of the large number of surviving tomb inscriptions we have a considerable range of terminology for tombs and parts of tombs (see remarks by Negev 1971, 50).

Words for "tomb" and "burial" include several derivatives of the root Q̰BR as might be expected. *qbrʾ* may be regarded as the most basic word for "tomb" or "grave" (Cantineau 1932, II, 141), while *qbrtʾ* appears to be used for the action of "burial" (H 34:5). *mqbrʾ* is used for "tomb" in several inscriptions including one from Sīʿ (*RES* § 805:7) and the bilingual inscription from the Bāb es-Sīq at Petra, where it has the Greek equivalent μνημεῖον (Healey 1993, 243). In the Turkmāniyyeh inscription it appears to mean "burial". *mqbrtʾ* is also used for "tomb", as in the Madeba tomb inscriptions (*CIS* II, 196:1) and in several Ḥawrān inscriptions (*RES* §§ 1090:6; 2033:6; 481).

kprʾ is restricted geographically in use for "tomb" to the Ḥegra region (H 1:1; 3:1, etc.; Healey 1993, 260). It is definitely a loan-word from Lihyanite (Healey 1993, 69), since it never has the meaning "tomb" elsewhere in Aramaic except once in early Syriac (Drijvers and Healey 1999, 193: Bs2:7, 196-97), and there it may again be a North-Arabian loan. Another term in use at Ḥegra, *wgrʾ* (H 11:2) may mean "rock-tomb": it is also used of a cult-object associated with Allāt (see above on Allāt and Healey 1993, 133).

Unlike the foregoing terms, *npšʾ*, referring normally to the pyramidal stele engraved on rock-faces, may have more religious significance. It appears to mean "funerary monument", the equivalent of Greek μνημεῖον (Cantineau 1932, II, 121; *DNWSI*, 748). In *CIS* II, 196:1-2 (the Madeba inscription) we have the phrase *mqbrtʾ wtry npštʾ dy [ʿl]ʾ mnh*, "the tomb and the two funeral monuments above it", making a clear distinction between the tomb and the associated memorial monuments (Healey 1993, 247-48). The *napšā* does not necessarily have a burial immediately associated with it. A series of *napšātā* at the entrance to the Sīq at Petra is of this kind. They are essentially commemorative (Starcky 1966, cols 951-52).

The primitive view of the *napšā* (Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ) appears to have been that it embodied the individual in his or her post-mortal state (Patrich 1990a, 122-23; Starcky 1966, cols. 951-56), but this ideology was rooted in a nomadic past and was gradually lost by the urbanized Nabataeans, so that the term came to be used for "funerary monument" (Gawlikowski 1982, 302; 1972). This is very clear in the inscriptions on the *napšātā* found at the entrance to the Sīq at Petra (Starcky 1965a; 1965b). The specific meaning of the word *napšā* became gradually devalued so that the word often meant simply "stele" or the like.

Terms for associated installations attached to tombs are mentioned especially by the Turkmāniyyeh inscription (*CIS* II, 350) and one of the Ḥegra texts (H 1): *ṣryḥʾ*, "chamber, tomb-chamber" (*CIS* II, 350:1; H 24: 3,4; Healey 1993, 182), *gwḥʾ*, "burial-niche, *loculus*" (*CIS* II, 350:1; H 2:1, etc.; Healey 1993, 82; Palmyrene *gwmḥʾ* and Akkadian original *kimaḫu*), *bssʾ*, "platform" (H 1:1; discussion Healey 1993, 69-70) and *krkʾ*, "enclosure" (*CIS* II, 350:2; H 1:1; Healey 1993, 70). The Turkmāniyyeh inscription also mentions a number of other features. We have already discussed the *triclinia* sometimes attached to tombs and the associated *marzēḥā* rituals.

The general phenomenon of Semitic burial inscriptions was reviewed by Lidzbarski over a hundred years ago (1898, 137-48) and his comments on the character of the Nabataean tomb inscriptions, which are especially concentrated at Ḥegra, are invaluable. Parrot (1939, 76-89) also discussed them in a wider context. There are several points at which Lidzbarski noted the distinctive character of these inscriptions within the Semitic tradition of such texts. For example, it may be noted that most were prepared by the main person who was to be buried in the tomb, not by relatives. As we shall see, there are other peculiarities about the Nabataean tomb inscriptions.

At Ḥegra thirty-five of the tombs have inscriptions on the façade and three have an interior as well as an exterior inscription (see, e.g., Plate IXa). Four further inscriptions have unclear or incomplete dates and three only are definitely not dated (H 15, 21, 23). Of the exterior inscriptions almost all are surrounded by decorative "cartouches", usually formed by a raised border, though sometimes there is little more than a recess in which the inscription is written. Occasionally the cartouche takes the form of a *tabula ansata* (e.g., H 6, 25). These exterior inscriptions are in all cases but one (H 14) placed centrally on the façade above the door, often at a great height and in one case the inscription is obscured by a decorative griffin (H 9). It must have been very difficult to read the inscriptions from the ground in antiquity as now.

There is considerable variety in the inscriptions with regard to restrictions on the use of the tomb and its inalienablity and in the formulary used. Note may be made of the following main types:

1. Those which record that X or X+Y built the tomb (or niche) for himself/herself/themselves (c. 22 inscriptions — some are unclear, e.g. H 6 and 18).
2. Those stating ownership but not saying anything about who made the tomb (c. 11).
3. Those stating that the tomb was made by X for Y (H 13, 24, 29).
4. Those recording the gift of the tomb from X to Y (H 27 and H 34, the latter also stating ownership as in type 2).

All four types are essentially legal and so are all the inscriptions apart from two cases where only a name is recorded.

Despite similarities in basic attitudes to the dead, the differences between these texts and other contemporary late Aramaic burial inscriptions are much more obvious than the similarities. This is partly because of the legal-sounding content of most of the Ḥegra texts. The most common formulary of the Ḥegra texts is "This is the tomb which X made". The best analogies are with Lihyanite, where we find a formula similar to the Nabataean: "X son of Y (son of) Z built this tomb (*kpr*) for himself and his heirs, all of it. And he took possession of the two burial-chambers (*hmṯbrn*) in the second year of Tulmay son of Hā-nuʾās" (JS II, 375-77: no. 45; Caskel 1953, 111-12: no. 74). In Palmyrene too there are analogies to the Nabataean ("X made this tomb": *CIS* II, 4160) and again a date may sometimes be indicated (*CIS* II, 4121). The legal aspect is most obvious in Palmyrene in so far as some of the Palmyrene tomb inscriptions establish the cession of a tomb or part of a tomb (*CIS* II, 4194, 4195). One of the Ḥegra inscriptions may be regarded as recording a cession of this kind (H 27). That the texts are legal and rather like real estate deeds is made particularly clear by the few instances in which precise details of who shall have the use of which part of the tomb are indicated (H 14, 24, 33). For this feature there is an interesting parallel in a Palmyrene tomb inscription of a later date (A.D. 214) (Ingholt 1962, 106).

Another feature of the inscriptions is the listing of forbidden actions (selling, mortgaging, giving away, etc.). Such prohibitions are found in burial inscriptions from various sources: tombs share *ḥaram*-ness with temples and other *sacra* (Gawlikowski 1982, 313). Warnings against misuse and disturbance of the tomb, especially in the form of curses, are also a common enough feature (Parrot 1939), but the Nabataean texts are unusual, at least so far as the Semitic sphere is concerned, especially the fact that not only curses but also *fines* are invoked against the wrong-doer (Lidzbarski 1898, 142-43).

Details of fines are contained in thirteen of the Ḥegra inscriptions (e.g. H 12, 19). The fines are normally imposed simply for "doing other than what is written above". In a few cases a more specific offence is mentioned. In H 11 the offence is the actual violation of the bones in the burial niche; in H 12 altering the inscription; in H 19 the writing of an illicit document, forgery, in relation to the tomb, revoking the terms of the inscription; in H 30 selling the tomb; in H 38 selling or forging. The recipients of fines are the gods (usually Dushara and associates) and officials (generally the king, once the governor [H 38], once the *ʾpklʾ* [H 16]). Sometimes, where there is no fine, loss of rights or dispossession is specified: H 4, 26, 30 (which has fines *and* loss of rights for selling the tomb).

Semitic parallels to the imposition of fines are few (cf. in Palmyrene: Cantineau 1933, 184-86: B), but fines and other features of the texts are paralleled in the Greek and Lycian tomb inscriptions of Lycia (5th century B.C. onwards) (Healey 1993, 47-48). Just as a copy of the Nabataean tomb inscription was lodged in a temple, as is proved by inscription H 36:9, so in the case of the Greek inscriptions a copy (ἀντίγραφον, "certified copy of an official document") was placed in a public registry.

We can really only speculate on the question of how the Nabataeans conceived of the afterlife. They certainly invested such energy in the creation of tombs as to suggest that the concept of an "eternal home" was very significant to them. The importance of burial and tombs to the ancient Semites is amply documented from Mesopotamia, Syria, the Aramaeans and the Israelites (note Saggs 1958; Spronk 1986). If we may take Ugarit of the Late Bronze Age as an example (Healey 1977), the basic features are as follows. Firstly, the dead had to be treated with respect and care. Burial in fine stone-built vaults was practised and at Ugarit these vaults were normally under the houses. Secondly, while the question of the possible happiness of the ordinary dead was left unclear, dead kings already enjoyed immortality and a kind of apotheosis (Healey 1984). Thirdly, we find the notion of eating and drinking with the dead in a fellowship which kept the memory of the dead alive.

Among the Nabataeans, as we have seen, at least two of these elements play a prominent role, careful burial and ritual meals for the dead. The sanctity of the tombs almost goes without saying, but in the case of the inscribed tombs it becomes explicit. Curses and other punishments are threatened against anyone who disturbs the tomb improperly. This certainly relates to basic traditional Semitic notions about the importance of proper burial as classically discussed by Parrot (1939). The *triclinia* are probably to be associated with the idea of commemorating and sharing meals with the dead.

With regard to the third element, the question of the deification of kings is discussed in Chapter V and there is considerable doubt about it. What is likely, however, is that all the kings received special treatment at death. This is clear in so far as it is agreed that certain of the most elaborate tombs of Petra are royal. Several have been identified. If the tomb of Obodas III is not at ʿAvdat (above) it may be the Corinthian Tomb at Petra. The Khazneh may be the tomb of Aretas III (with associated *triclinium*: Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904, I, 231-32, fig. 261: no. 65). The Urn Tomb may be that of Aretas IV, the Palace Tomb that of Malichus II (Niehr 1998, 231-34).

It may be noted that even in such early sources as those of Ugarit, euphemisms with regard to the dead were already common. In the later Aramaic texts a very prominent notion was that the tomb was an "eternal home", in Palmyrene and early Syriac *byt ʿlmʾ* (Hillers and Cussini 1996, 397; Drijvers and Healey 1999, 59-60: As7:3, etc.) and the same phrase is found in Nabataean at Petra (Negev 1971, 50-52: line 1) and also in the Naḥal Ḥever papyri (Yadin 1962, 243-44: *byt ʿlmy*, "my eternal home"; other occurrences see Negev 1971, 51, n.9). It may derive ultimately from Egyptian and has some parallels in the Hebrew Bible. We also find euphemisms such as "the change of death" (*ḥlp mwt*) befalling someone, meaning "he died" (H 9:6), and *ʾwnʾ*, "dwelling" (for "tomb", H 25:1; Ephrem the Syrian uses "mansions of the dead" [Healey 1993, 186]). Late Aramaic certainly saw the flowering of interest in the dead and their welfare. In Palmyra, Jerusalem, Edessa and Nabataea, tombs and tomb inscriptions become a specific and important genre.

From a modern viewpoint, we would expect tombs to have the names of those buried in them clearly identified. The situation is, however, more complex. The Ḥegra tombs certainly name the owners and indicate without naming them the categories of persons who are expected to be buried in the tomb. But a rather mysterious feature at Petra is the general absence of inscriptions from the numerous tombs, with the notable exception of the Turkmāniyyeh tomb. Gawlikowski (1975-76) argued that there was a ban on putting names on the outsides of tombs at Petra because of the ancient sanctity of the site. Hence even the Turkmāniyyeh inscription contains no name. However, caution is needed before we arrive at such a conclusion. The Turkmāniyyeh tomb may have belonged to a temple and Petra *does* have grave inscriptions containing personal names, both inside tombs (as acknowledged by Gawlikowski) and outside tombs (as in the major bilingual tomb inscription in the outer Sīq area: Milik 1976, 143-47), so that any religious principle which was involved must be more complicated than Gawlikowski supposes. In any case, inscriptions may have been written in Petra on materials which have not survived as well as the stone of Ḥegra.

Whatever, therefore, we say about Nabataean attitudes to the dead, the report of Strabo that the Nabataeans threw dead bodies on dung-heaps is far from the mark and undermines his reliability as a witness to Nabataean society (Dijkstra 1995, 297-307).

Religious Formulae

Nabataean inscriptions are often formulaic. Of the formulae which have religious significance, two may be noted, those which begin with the phrase "Remembered be ..." and those containing the information that a pious act was carried out "for the life of ..." a third party, usually a member of the royal family.

"Remembered be ..."

Memorials of this type are extremely common throughout the world of the late Aramaic inscriptions (Healey 1996). The basic formula in Nabataean is *dkyr bṭb*, "May he be remembered for good". Lidzbarski (1898, 165-69) gave an admirable survey of the material, principally Nabataean, known down to his time. Variations on the Nabataean formula include:

> *dkyr PN/PN dkyr*
> Remembered be PN (e.g. *CIS* II, 376, 393bis, 1373, 1378, 1379);
> *dkyr PN bṭb (wbryk)*
> Remembered be PN for good (and blessed) (408, 493, 494);

dkyr bṭb PN
Remembered for good be PN (1174, 3229);
dkyr PN bšlm
Remembered be PN for peace (750);
dkyr PN bṭb wšlm
Remembered be PN for good and peace (785, 1375);
dkyr PN bṭb lʿlm
Remembered be PN for good forever (JS II, 205-06: no. 281, *CIS* II, 3200);
dkyr PN bkl ṭb
Remembered be he for all good (1570)

bryk, "blessed", is used as well as *dkyr*, "remembered", in formulae similar to those cited and in a smaller number of cases a deity is in fact mentioned — sometimes we find *šlm* ("peace") rather than *dkyr*:

dkyr PN qdm DN
Remembered be PN before DN (Savignac 1932, 593: no. 3: corrected reading);
dkyr PN bṭb mn qdm DN
Remembered be PN for good before DN (*CIS* II, 443);
dkyr PN mn qdm DN bṭb
Remembered be PN before DN for good (Savignac 1933, 415: no. 5);
PN šlm mn qdm DNN
PN, peace before DNN (*CIS* II, 320)
šlm PN qdm DN
Peace, PN, before DN (1479)
dkrwn PN mn qdm DN
Remembrance of PN before DN (338)

There is an important but rarer type of expression in Nabataean in which it is explicitly stated that it is the deity who does the blessing:

bl dkrt DN
Indeed may DN remember (JS II, 190: no. 213);
dkrt DN PNN bṭb
May DN remember PNN for good (Savignac 1933, 412ff.: nos. 3, 7-11, etc.);
dkrt DN PN bšlm
May DN remember PNN for peace (JS II, 189-90: no. 212).

In these cases, *dkrt* is an optative or precative perfect and the divine name is the subject. The deity is female: hence the *-t* ending on the verb. The deity can be any one of the known gods and Dushara is not particularly prominent.

There are plenty of examples associated with Nabataean graffiti from Sinai of the Greek equivalent of *dkyr PN*, μνησθῇ *PN* ("Remembered be PN").

It is difficult to understand clearly the distinction between those formulae which mention a deity and those which do not. There is a theoretical possibility that some of the inscriptions which do not mention a deity might be commemorations of the dead, but it should be noted that in no case where these Nabataean formulae are used is there any evidence that they are connected with burials. It is better to assume that the named persons are normally the authors of the graffiti.

Similar fairly enigmatic formulae are found in Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, Palmyrene and Hatran (details: Healey 1996). Thus in the pagan Syriac inscriptions we find (Drijvers and Healey 1999):

> *dkyr PN* (As20:7)
> *dkyr PN qdm ʾlhʾ* (As26)
> *dkyr PN dkyr qdm mrlhʾ* (As31).

It is, however, the Palmyrene and Hatran corpora which throw light on how this formula was conceived. The well-known Palmyrene inscription dated A.D. 132 and in fact erected by a person of Nabataean background (*CIS* II, 3973) contains the following:

> These two altars have been made by PN ... to DN ... And remembered be PN ... before DN ... and remembered be every one who visits (*or* passes by) these altars and says 'Remembered be all these for good'.

The idea here seems to be that the person concerned is commemorated before the deity and a similar blessed memory is to come to anyone who visits the shrine and *says* that the named person is to be remembered. Here we have expressed explicitly an element which is left implicit in the Nabataean: it is specifically the *mentioning* of the name (in a favourable way) which is important, i.e. the praising or blessing of the named individual.

There are also two rather interesting Palmyrene examples from Dura-Europos which throw some light on the formula. One of these, on a fresco in a house, has:

> Remembered and blessed be the men who are depicted here before Bel and Yarḥibōl and ʿAglibōl and Arṣu; and remembered be PNN who painted this picture... (du Mesnil du Buisson 1939, 14-16: no. 25).

Here the blessing involved is not upon named individuals, but individuals whose pictures appear on the wall. Those being drawn to the attention of the gods are not dead at the time of depiction.

Similarly Hatran Aramaic offers a variety of formulations (Vattioni 1981, index) and Hatra gives a further explicit insight into the actual meaning and function of the phrase *dkyr lṭb*. Hatra text 101 has:

> Remembered be PN and PN before DN for good ... and the curse of DN on anyone who reads this inscription and does not say 'Remembered be'.

There are several Hatran inscriptions of this type and they make it clear through the curse-formula that what was expected of the passer-by (or in the Hatran case the frequenter of the particular temple-building) was that he should *mention* the named individual.

The Palmyrene and Hatran texts we have quoted show very clearly what is going on here. The invocation implied in *dkyr* (*bryk*) is to the passer-by or visitor to a sanctuary who sees the inscription and is required to say something, viz. "Remembered be PN", a formula which perpetuates (in a positive way) the memory of the person concerned (whether he is dead or alive) and, in the case of those inscriptions placed in temples, ensures his nominal presence in the sanctuary "before the god".

"For the life of ..."

The key phrase in these inscriptions is *ʿl ḥyy*..., "for the life of ...", which may have an older Semitic precursor in the *ana balāṭ* formula in Akkadian (Deller 1983). Again they are very widespread. Apart from the Nabataean examples they are found also in Palmyrene, Hatran and Edessan Aramaic (i.e. early Syriac) and there are also Greek versions of the formula (Dijkstra 1995). These inscriptions are mostly expressions of political loyalty.

Of the Nabataean instances (Dijkstra 1995, 34-80), some relate to the erection of statues and are dedicated explicitly to a particular god. The earliest of the surviving Nabataean inscriptions, assigned to the reign of Aretas I or II and found at Elusa in the Negev, belongs to this type (A. Cowley in Woolley and Lawrence 1915, 145-46; Cantineau 1932, II, 43-44; Dijkstra 1995, 48-50). The oldest inscription at Petra, similarly, the Aṣlaḥ inscription of c. 90 B.C. above a niche and related religious chambers (*ṣryḥyʾ*), is dedicated to Dushara "for the life of Obodas, king of the Nabataeans" (Dijkstra 1995, 50-55). Among other examples from Petra is an inscription dedicated possibly to Baalshamin (Khairy 1981, with additional note by Milik; Dijkstra 1995, 55-57) "for the life of King Aretas" and other members of the royal family. It is, perhaps, a little strange to find Baalshamin implicated as a royal deity at Petra; Baalshamin may be the deity of the dedicator, perhaps a visitor from the northern region. The Obodas chapel inscription discussed in connection with the divinization of kings falls into the same formal category: the statue of the divine Obodas was set up "for the life of King Aretas" and other members of the royal family (*CIS* II, 354; Dijkstra 1995. 57-60). Dijkstra notes further examples from Petra (1995, 60-63), including a particularly interesting one in which the dedicants are explicitly stated to be visitors to Petra (Dalman 1912, 101-06: no. 92; *RES* §1434; re-read by Milik and Starcky 1970, 158; Dijkstra 1995, 61-62). They express and publicize their loyalty to Rabel and other members of the Nabataean royal family (against Dijkstra).

Outside Petra, the two most important inscriptions from Tannūr, those made by the official responsible for the Laᶜbān water source, belong in the same category and again the dedicant is showing his political allegiance to Aretas IV (Dijkstra 1995, 66-67). Naveh reconstructed another inscription of the same type from ᶜAvdat (1967; Dijkstra 1995, 67-68), while we have noted yet another from ᶜAyn esh-Shallāleh "for the life of King Rabel" and family (Savignac 1933, 407-11: no. 1; Dijkstra 1995, 68-69). The Pozzuoli inscription, dated A.D. 5, is another of these expressions of loyalty, to Aretas IV (*CIS* II, 158; Dijkstra 1995, 72-74). And finally, the bilingual Syllaeus inscription from Miletus in which Dushara is identified with Zeus, belongs to the same type (Rehm and Kawerau 1914, 263-65: no. 165; Clermont-Ganneau 1924a; Cantineau 1932, II, 45-56; Dijkstra 1995, 70-72). This is the Syllaeus who tried to prevent Aretas IV's accession, but here he is acting as a royal official who expresses his loyalty by erecting one of these special types of inscription.

Although there are a very few Nabataean examples of this formulary in which the beneficiary of the dedication is non-royal (Dijkstra 1995, 74-80), it is clear that the main context of these inscriptions, in Nabataea at least, is that of clients of the royal family expressing their loyalty, whether in the process of dedicating a location for a private cult, perhaps in some cases involving pilgrimage to Petra from an out-lying spot, or dedicating a more public building or statue. This whole situation seems to imply a close tie being made between religious acts and loyalty to the family. Even if a Nabataean pursued his own specialist devotions at one of the many locations identified as sites of private cults, he felt it necessary to tie this in to the state, perhaps to confirm publicly that, to use a modern way of expressing it, there was nothing subversive about his private religious acts. He was a bit like English Roman Catholics inserting prayers for the Protestant Queen in their Mass! If he were on official business, like Syllaeus or the administrator of the spring near Tannūr, he tied his loyalty to the royal family with his public acts of religious devotion.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE WORLD OF NABATAEAN RELIGION

The task of summarizing and characterizing the Nabataean religious world in Paden's sense of the phrase (Chapter I) is well beyond the potential of the evidence. In some areas of Nabataean religious life there seems to be plenty of evidence. There is much more direct evidence than there is, for example, for the more or less contemporary religious world of Edessa in Mesopotamia, perhaps more than there is for Palmyra.

But on close inspection the quantity of epigraphic material is deceptive. Much of the very direct evidence provided by inscriptions is enigmatic and insubstantial. From it we gain a fair impression of religious structures, that there was, for example, a tradition of certain types of dedication, but the epigraphy tells us next to nothing about the characteristics of particular gods and, therefore, what the faithful had in mind when they worshipped them. Only the broadest themes of Nabataean religion emerge, and even then some aspects of our interpretations have to be based on analogy with related and similar religious worlds rather than on indisputable direct evidence. However, we can tentatively say something in conclusion!

As noted by Wenning and Merklein (1997, 107), the world of the Nabataean gods was the result of a complex bringing together of north Arabian, Edomite, Syrian and Egyptian traditions, within the new context of the Hellenized East. Only Dushara, Obodas and the divinized Bosra would be counted as genuinely Nabataean and Dushara is to be seen as a local version of the near universal god of heaven, elsewhere represented as Baalshamin. Dushara to some extent turned the tables on Baalshamin through the Nabataeans' political expansion, so that Baalshamin was imported into Nabataea as a minor deity.

The Nabataeans appear to have worshipped few deities and it is possible to interpret the evidence as indicating really only two, what we have called the Nabataean God and the Nabataean Goddess. There can be no doubt that the Nabataean God is to be identified as Dushara, though this is probably in origin a title of the deity rather than a proper name. Attempts have been made to pin down the true name of

Dushara. Starcky and many followers of his view claim that Dushara is really a title of Ruḍā, but this is in our analysis far from sure. There are doubts about the gender of Ruḍā, but even if these are convincingly set aside, there remains the fact that Ruḍā *never* appears in a Nabataean inscription and is never associated with the Nabataeans by any outside source. What we *do* know of Dushara is that he was probably a local god of southern Jordan and that certainly in the post-Nabataean period and in contact with the world of Greco-Roman religion he was comfortably assimilated to Zeus and Dionysos. We have argued that there indications of a solar aspect to Dushara, but we cannot pretend that this is at all certain for the Nabataean period.

So far as the Nabataean Goddess is concerned, the probability is that Allāt and al-ᶜUzzā, both clearly documented as major deities in Nabataea, were treated as two manifestations of a single divine reality, the Supreme Goddess. Their cults appear to be distributed geographically in such a way as to suggest that the Supreme Goddess was worshipped as al-ᶜUzzā at Petra but as Allāt at Iram, and both acquired characteristics of other supreme goddesses of the Roman world, especially Isis and Atargatis.

All other deities pale into insignificance beside these, but there was undoubtedly worship of other, quite separate deities in particular regions or in particular segments of society. Manōtu and to a considerably lesser extent Hubal seem to have had a certain role in northern Arabia, while Baalshamin may have been brought into the Nabataean sphere through the political, military and commercial involvement of the Nabataeans in the Ḥawrān, a region not easy to integrate into the world of Nabataean religion. Of the various gods, only Dushara, al-ᶜUzzā, Allāt and al-Kutbā are truly multiregional (Wenning and Merklein 1997, 107) and inscriptions often locate deities in particular temples (at Gaia, Bosra, Ṣalkhad, etc.).

As might be expected, protective deities (as we have called them) of various kinds were cultivated. The evidence for the family god is clear; that for the tribal god is slight but highly suggestive of similar religious structures of protective deities operating also at a higher level. On the level of city Tyches the evidence is again somewhat clearer (though heavily dependent on iconographic interpretation). And because of the nature of many of our inscriptions we are also well informed on the notion of the main gods of the state being associated artificially, as part of a political claim, with the royal family: the gods of our lord the king.

We can say even less of Nabataean cults, but the fragments of evidence support the analysis of Nehmé (1997), who distinguishes public communal cults, private communal cults and private individual cults. The first category is well represented by the temples and processional ways which have been studied. Noteworthy is the fact that the archaeological remains of these often point to the participation of significant numbers of worshippers, though the main focus may have been on particular festal seasons and pilgrimages. Individual acts of piety and devotion are evidenced by the multitude of path-side niches and inscriptions and, perhaps, by the many terracotta figurines which may have been presented by individuals in temples.

A clear and distinctive (if not unique) feature, however, is provided by many locations at Petra and at Ḥegra where private communal cults were carried out, often away from the centres of activity in locations where only small numbers of devotees could participate. The inscriptions indicate that many, but not all, of these can be grouped under the heading of the *marzēḥā*, the term for the religious sodality of devotees of a particular deity who evidently formed a kind of fellowship with meetings, perhaps in *triclinia*, and participated in ritual consumption, probably of wine. Newer evidence suggests that many such sodalities had a professional basis (builders, slaves, etc.).

The average Nabataean, man or woman (on women see al-Fassi 2000), thus operated from a religious point of view on at least two levels. As a Nabataean he or she was committed automatically to the state religion, that of Dushara, and would have participated to some extent in annual festivals and also rituals connected with his or her own life cycle. Of annual festivals we know virtually nothing, though it is likely that there was a solsticial festival of the kind alluded to by Epiphanius, in which the rebirth of Dushara as sun-deity was celebrated. It is also likely, though there is no evidence, that there was a spring festival connected with the flocks and, at least in settled Nabataea, a New Year festival analogous to, but probably not identical with the Bel-Marduk creation festival celebrated in Palmyra. The physical arrangements of temple *temenoi* suggest that these public occasions must have been made visible to the worshippers and that some form of audience participation was involved, probably including processions.

So far as the life-cycle is concerned, there can be little doubt that circumcision rituals took place and the inscriptions show that funerary rituals were of great significance. The provision of *triclinia* and other installations in connection with the more elaborate tombs suggests that rituals for the dead took place on some sort of recurrent basis. They may have been connected with secondary burial, the reburial of the excarnated bones of the recently deceased. Although these rituals might seem like private affairs leaving scope for individual piety, such evidence as we have from the inscriptions suggests that there was state involvement, at least in the burials of the elite, since Dushara is the main god mentioned in the protection of tombs and the ownership of tombs was recorded in state archives.

Nabataean mythology, whether related to cult (myth and ritual context) or purely literary (speculative theological context), like Nabataean literature of a non-religious kind, is completely unknown to us. The work of Ibn Waḥshiyyah called *The Nabataean Agriculture* tells us something about pre-Islamic religion and culture in Mesopotamia but nothing about the Nabataeans — the term Nabataean ceased to have any connection with the Nabataean kingdom or its aftermath. We cannot even with our Nabataean sources go as far as scholars who have tried to reconstruct aspects of pre-Islamic Arabian religion. Henninger (1954) was able to speculate on star myths related to star-names. Chelhod (1954) discussed the heavenly origin of agriculture, languages, writing and technology. Al-Udhari (1997) sought to restore from fragments the Arab creation myth and Stetkevych (1996) reconstructed the story of the pre-Islamic prophet Ṣāliḥ. None of this is possible for the Nabataeans, though we can be sure that they did have a full range of stories about their gods and heroes, perhaps even a national epic. Indeed, they may have shared much with the pre-Islamic bedouin — but we do not know.

There remain some broader themes which are worth further consideration:

A Desert Tradition?

Many connections have been noted with pre-Islamic Arabian religion and the religion of Arabian nomads (Henninger 1981) and this is usually understood as a legacy of the Nabataeans' earlier history (Dijkstra 1995, 10-14). It is part of a wider phenomenon, however, in that elements of tribal structures and traditional religion are detectable in certain social groups in other centres of this period such as Palmyra and Edessa (Dijkstra 1995, 13-14). It is important not to exaggerate this nomadic background. The Nabataeans had been settled or largely settled for a long time before the 1st century A.D. from which much of our evidence comes and so far as religion is concerned Dushara appears to be a well-established local god with long-established temples in places like Gaia. His name, it is usually believed, has to do with the Sharā mountains — even if it is an epithet rather than a proper name. And despite his presence in Islamic accounts of pre-Islamic religion, he appears, like some of the other gods in those sources, such as Hubal, to be regarded as an import into Arabia from the North.

Despite these cautionary remarks, it can hardly be denied that the Nabataean religious world owes something to the Arabian religious tradition. After all the names of two of the main deities, Dushara and al-ᶜUzzā, have been interpreted almost universally as formations coming from an Early North Arabian language. Certain other deities worshipped by some or all of the Nabataeans have an Arabian background and, negatively, are unknown in the world of traditional Syrian religion except as imports (Shayᶜ-al-Qawm, al-ᶜUzzā, Manāt, Hubal). On the other hand, in the long-settled agricultural areas which the Nabataeans intermittently ruled, Baalshamin was adopted and Dionysos and Zeus were assimilated to the dynastic god Dushara (Teixidor 1977, 82-84). Dushara in particular, because he survived as the dynastic god, had to undergo more adaptations than the other deities. He was an "Arabian" god who was changed by the geographical and cultural dispersal of his devotees (Hammond 1973, 94).

While the Arabian aspect must be acknowledged, there is no need to think in terms of regions beyond the northern Ḥijāz for a putative homeland of these religious features and it is as well to note that the near neighbours and predecessors of the Nabataeans, the Lihyanites, had long been established in Dedan, while other religious traditions flourished in Taymāʾ and among the writers of the various types of Thamudic and Safaitic. These considerations, combined with the evidence that Dushara is a local god rather than an import from a remote area, suggest that the Nabataeans and their religion evolved in North-West Arabia.

Aniconism

Nabataean aniconism has been discussed in detail by Patrich (1990) and Mettinger (1995a, 57-68; see also Patrich 1990b; Mettinger 1997). The latter distinguishes two main forms of aniconism in the ancient and Hellenistic-Roman Middle East, a tolerant, *de facto* aniconism and a programmatic, intolerant aniconism (of the kind associated with the Israelite and later Islamic views). Aniconic cults use stone steles as representatives of the god (material aniconism), or even leave an empty space where the god was regarded as sitting (empty-space aniconism). The idea of the empty chair on which the deity sits is clear in Lucian of Samosata, who tells us in the *Dea Syra* §34 that the temple in Hierapolis was full of images, but that Helios (and Selene) were not represented by statues (Greek ed. Macleod 1980; Attridge and Oden 1976, 44-47). The throne of Helios was there:

> ... αὐτοῦ δὲ ἕδος οὐκ ἔνι · μούνου δὲ Ἠελίου καὶ Σεληναίης ξόανα οὐ δεικνύουσιν
>
> ... but his statue is not on it. For only of Helios and Selene do they not display images.

Mettinger notes among other details the association of stele-cults with open-air sanctuaries and high-places in which the essential idea is one of sharing in meals with the deity or deities, by contrast with temple-based cults, where the main idea is usually of feeding the deity. The cult of steles (*maṣṣēbōt*) is regarded as having desert roots (Avner 1984, 119).

That the Nabataeans had some sort of aversion to the making of statues and specifically the making of statues of gods is already hinted at in Strabo, who tells us that among other things "embossed works, paintings and moulded works" are not produced in Nabataea (16.4.26), but it is made explicit in the famous passage in the *Suda* quoted earlier, which continues with a description of the iconography of Dushara (ed. Adler 1931, II, 713, English based on Patrich 1990a, 51:

> Theus-Ares: this is the god Ares in Petra of Arabia. The god Ares is worshipped among them, for they honour him especially. The image is a black stone, square, unshaped, four feet high, two wide. It is placed on a gold-plated base. To this they sacrifice and pour out the blood of sacrificial victims. This is for them the libation. The whole building is rich in gold and there are many dedications.

Arab/Nabataean aniconism was well known to Roman writers and was imported into the Roman world (Turcan 1996, 185-86). Apart from those already cited, many writers allude to it, including

Arnobius (*Adversus Nationes*, vi, 11) and Clement of Alexandria (*Protrepticus*, iv, 46, 2).

We cannot assume that these sources preserve authentic detail, but there are plenty of evidences to support the aniconic character of some aspects of Nabataean religion, since it is reflected in the worship of the stone-carved blocks. The tradition was so strong that it could even be extended to deities who did not have anything to do with the aniconic tradition. Thus Qōs and Atargatis come to be represented as steles (Patrich 1990b, 186).

Mettinger reviews this evidence. There are 2nd century coins of the city of Adraa representing Dushara as a dome-shaped betyl and a post-Nabataean niche in the Petra Sīq with the same image, also associated with an inscription made by people from Adraa (Dalman 1908, 146: no. 150; Patrich 1990a, 72: fig. 18; see Plate XV lower right). There are Bosran coins of c. A.D. 200+ showing three betyls, one of which represents Dushara, the others presumably related deities (Kindler 1983, 58-60). But also from the Nabataean period there is an abundance of evidence of gods being represented by plain stone-carved betyls in niches or by betyls with minimal facial markings. All the Nabataean gods were represented in this way throughout the Nabataean realm and throughout Nabataean history (Mettinger 1995, 62-63). The term *ṣlmʾ* does not appear in connection with Dushara: Mettinger therefore rightly rejects the restoration of *CIS* II, 442, which would introduce this idea (1995, 60 and n. 15).

The Strabo quotation telling us that the Nabataeans did not produce embossed works, etc. relates to the relatively early date of c. 25 B.C. or earlier. Later, images of deities were produced, but this appears to have been under Roman influence (Hammond 1973, 94; Niehr 1998, 227) and in the process of adopting images an *interpretatio graeca* was given to the gods. Allāt becomes iconographically Atargatis or Athena, al-ʿUzzā becomes Venus. It seems that the Nabataean deities themselves, when at home, so to speak, were not imagined in terms of being like human beings. The Greco-Roman image was taken on board, but the native deities lurked behind the new façade. Also these Greek forms were limited largely to the state cult in the great temples. Private cults were unaffected (even if foreign deities were introduced like Isis) (Wenning and Merklein 1997, 110). And the innovation of making statues did not result in the decline of non-figurative representations (Patrich 1990b, 186).

Very direct evidence of the making of images can be seen in the marble hand from a statue found in the *adyton* of the Qaṣr el-Bint temple in Petra. That statues of certain types of deity were made is explicit in the en-Nmēr inscription of the god ʿObodat: there we find direct reference to a statue (*ṣlmʾ*) being made. This may provide one clue to the origins of this innovation, the almost inevitable first step of depicting kings on coins and then on honorific statues (including the statue of the divine Obodas) (Patrich 1990b, 188-90). Less certain are the supposed divine figures among Nabataean terracotta figurines. The figure of Dushara appears on some late coins and statuary (Mettinger 1995, 59-60; Kindler 1983, 60), but the tension here involved may be reflected in the so-called Dushara medallion niche (Hammond 1968), where Dushara appears to be represented doubly, by a plain stele and by a bust (Patrich 1990, 106-09; 1990b, 187; see Plate IVb). In general, the use side by side of betyls and statues must reflect a situation in the society in which some groups were more acculturated than others. The more sophisticated took to statues, those clinging to family and tribal traditions may have avoided them (Niehr 1998, 227). There is also some evidence of iconoclasm at Petra, which Patrich ascribes to the Nabataean period (Patrich 1990a, 156-57; 1990b, 190; Mettinger 1995, 65).

There can be little doubt that the aniconism of the Nabataeans is connected to the aniconic religious tradition of pre-Islamic north Arabia (Patrich 1990b, 189-91; Mettinger 1995, 69-79). This is amply attested to by Muslim sources such as Ibn al-Kalbī, where we can see deities frequently represented by stones or trees. Sacrificial blood was smeared on the *nuṣub/naṣb* and it is then described as *ǵārī*, "smeared". It will be recalled that the name of Aʿra has been thought to be connected with this term (Starcky 1966, 988-98). The term *nuṣub* is contrasted with the term *ṣanam*, which refers to a "statue" and according to Ibn al-Kalbī only two of the pre-Islamic deities had statues, Wadd and Hubal, the former an import from the south and the latter from the north. For the Nabataeans too only foreign gods had images, not true Nabataean gods in their own guise (Hammond 1981, 140).

One aspect of what the *Suda* says is confirmed by the Nabataean inscriptions themselves, the fact that Dushara's *mwtbʾ*, "throne, pedestal", was of special importance. It may be that the notion of giving separate status and veneration to the throne of the god arose out of the rather puritanical aniconic tradition. The elaboration of lecterns in post-Reformation churches springs to mind as comparable.

The later programmatic aniconism of Islam is beyond our scope. It is an interesting coincidence, however, perhaps no more, that the iconoclast emperor Leo III (714-41) was at one stage accused of being a Nabataean (Gero 1973, 32-33 and n. 3). By that period such an accusation was the equivalent of accusing someone of being a mere peasant.

Emergent Monotheism

We have seen in the discussion of Dushara and Allāt/al-ᶜUzzā a distinct feature of Nabataean religion of a tendency to restrict the pantheon to a principal god and his partner, even if this tendency is not yet fully developed (in so far as other minor deities are not altogether eliminated). Teixidor (1977, 161) referred to a "trend toward practical monotheism". This may have a connection with similar phenomena in contemporary north-west Arabia such as the evident (diluted) monotheism of pre-Islamic Mecca, later understood as associationism (Starcky 1987b, 204). Ultimately such tendencies might lead to monotheism or a modified version of it. This is also suggested by titles of Dushara such as "he who separates night from day" and (later) "Lord of the World".

Nor should we assume that such tendencies are a purely Arabian or Jewish-influenced phenomenon. Lambert (1975, 178-79), referring to "sophisticated polytheism", cites the long-known Late Babylonian text which shows that Marduk had taken over the functions of all the other Mesopotamian gods:

> Urash is Marduk of planting,
> Lugalidda is Marduk of the abyss,
> Ninurta is Marduk of the pickaxe,
> Nergal is Marduk of battle,
> Zababa is Marduk of warfare,
> Enlil is Marduk of lordship and consultations,
> Nabû is Marduk of accounting,
> Sîn is Marduk who lights up the night,
> Shamash is Marduk of justice,
> Adad is Marduk of rain,
> Tishpak is Marduk of troops ... (*Cuneiform Texts* 24 50, BM 47406 obv.)

This theology did not, of course, exclude a god from having a female partner, usually a spouse. A god could not be alone, even in monotheistic Israel (Hadley 2000).

Though the peoples who wrote the "Safaitic" inscriptions were more straightforwardly polytheist (borrowing gods such as Baalshamin and Dushara from the settled areas they came into contact with [Knauf 1985b]), the monotheistic tendency is part of a wider phenomenon of the Nabataean period, as may be seen from the monotheistic traits in aspects of Palmyrene religion. There the idea of an all-powerful Merciful God became well established (Healey 1998). Thus the title *rḥmnʾ*, “merciful”, is used of Baalshamin (e.g., PAT 0334:1), the Arab god ʿAzizu (PAT 0320:2-3) and the Palmyrene Anonymous God, often called “Blessed-Be-His-Name-Forever”, identified by some scholars with Baalshamin or a spiritualized version of him (Drijvers 1976, 15) or the sun-god Yarḥibol (Teixidor 1977, 122-30). Over two hundred altars dedicated to the Anonymous God have been found and there is considerable variation in the formula. Occasionally this deity is simply called *rḥmnʾ* (PAT 1558:9; 0997:2), but other adjectives used include *rḥmnʾ*, *ṭbʾ*, *ḥnnʾ*, *tyrʾ* and *skrʾ*, variously translated “merciful”, “good”, “compassionate”, “rewarding”, “generous”. Many of these titles have ancient Mesopotamian antecedents (Healey 1998).

The cult of the Merciful One (*rḥmnn*) also became a prominent feature of the latest phase of South Arabian religion, marking the rise of monotheism in the region. This new faith is usually accounted as a sign of Judaeo-Christian influence and there is no doubt that Judaism and Christianity had both made inroads in pre-Islamic South Arabia. However, it may be wondered whether a Jewish or Christian origin for this cult is really certain. Beeston expressed the same doubt (1984, 149-54, especially 150-51). In fact it is not difficult to imagine the South Arabian epithet arising from traditional pagan usage, since the worship of the Merciful One (*rḥmn*) was, as we have seen, widespread in Syria in the first centuries A.D. in a non-Christian and non-Jewish context under Mesopotamian cultural influence. Islamic usage of the epithets *raḥmān* and *raḥīm* is in turn often ascribed to South Arabian influence, but again the existence of the worship of *rḥmnʾ* in Syria forces us to allow for the possibility of a more northerly context.

The Nabataeans allowed Dushara, a local god of north Arabia, a predominant position. The term henotheism, referring to the worship of a single god without denying the reality of other gods (on which see Holsten 1959), was once quite popular but seems now to have been rejected in discussions of Old Testament monotheism (Fohrer 1973, 78). There are sufficient indications of a tendency towards henotheism or even monotheism in north-west Arabia and in Syria during this period to force us to keep this possibility in mind. Such henotheism would also imply that the worshippers of Dushara not only regarded him as their own god in some unique sense, but also that they saw other gods worshipped by other people as manifestations of Dushara. The best ancient example of this kind of belief is the later Babylonian treatment of all the gods as versions of Marduk (Lambert 1975, 197-98: above).

That the Nabataeans were not monotheists in the later sense of the term is, however, clear from the fact that goddess cults are prominent alongside the worship of Dushara. While it is a little difficult to be sure of all the details, it appears that Allāt, probably identified with al-ʿUzzā, was regarded as Dushara's partner. On the other hand, we may take the view that monotheism is compatible with the belief that the one true god has a partner or spouse. In ancient Israel, the fact that Yahweh was regarded by some of his adherents as having Asherah as his spouse only detracts from his monotheist status if we apply the later Judeo-Christian-Muslim criteria of monotheism. In the ancient world, to believe in a divine pair to the virtual exclusion of other deities probably seemed like a kind of monotheism, or we might call it dyotheism.

Nabataean Religion in the pre-Islamic Context

As we have seen, there were also other features of Nabataean religion which seem to prefigure religious ideas which became much more prominent in Islam:

There is the clear aniconic tradition, which we have characterized as a limited, *de facto* aniconism. In Islam this became programmatic to the extent that all images of the deity are eschewed (as was the case with Jewish aniconism).

Contact with Greco-Roman culture and associations with Greco-Roman deities led to *ad hoc* departures from the aniconic ideology. But the region where the aniconic tradition is largely unadulterated by Hellenistic influence, northern Arabia, does, of course, coincide with the region where Islam came to birth. It is, therefore, impossible to resist the conclusion that there was a deep-seated aniconic tradition of religion in northern Arabia and this is to a large extent confirmed by archaeological and literary evidence.

Statues of deities, when they are found, tend to be in the Hellenistic or Egyptian style, among the Lihyanites for example. We can safely assume that they are the result of outside influence. They were not rejected on principle, so the aniconism was traditional (*de facto*) rather that a matter of theological principle (programmatic). The literary evidence tends to confirm this in that the various descriptions of pre-Islamic Ḥijāzi religion put the focus on trees and sacred stones and poles rather than statues. The cities, however, had already undergone some influence from the Hellenistic world and the Kaᶜbah of Mecca already had statues such as that of Hubal. The Prophet's purification of the religion of the region consisted not only of demolishing statues, but of demolishing all false objects of worship. It was not the fact that there was a statue of Hubal that was objectionable, but the fact that Hubal was worshipped at all.

There is also slight evidence of some Nabataeans in some periods, perhaps the devotees of the "nomad" god Shayᶜ-al-Qawm, traditionally associated with non-sedentaries, rejecting the use of wine. Again this became programmatic in Islam.

Finally we find slight evidence, from Palmyra and Nabataea, of divine epithets like "the Merciful One" (*rḥmnʾ*), "Lord of the World" and "Lord of the House". The last two are titles of Dushara.

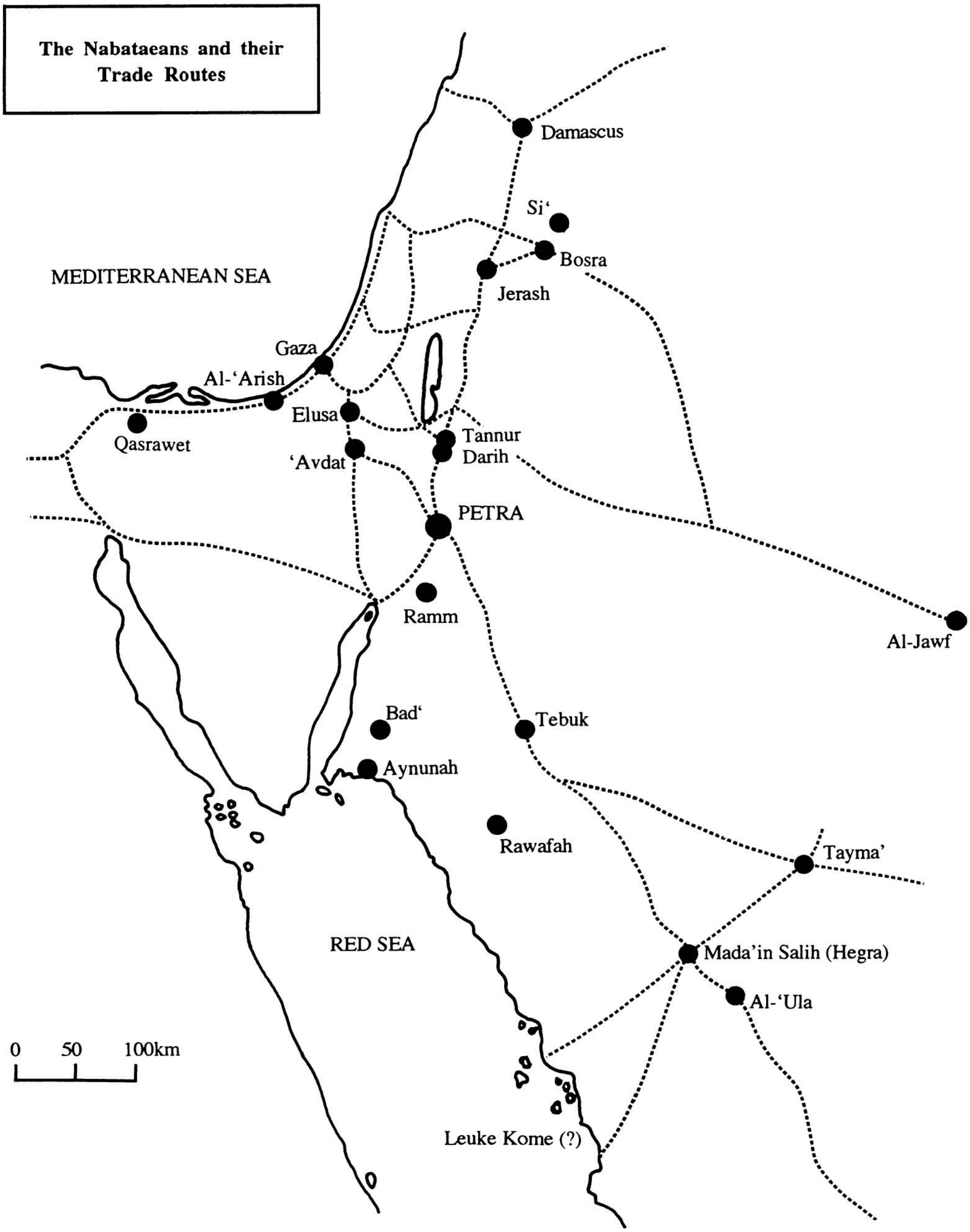
Despite the lengthy periods of close contact between Jerusalem and Petra and the presence of Jews within the Nabataean state, there is no evidence of any specific influence of the Abrahamic tradition in Nabataean religion.

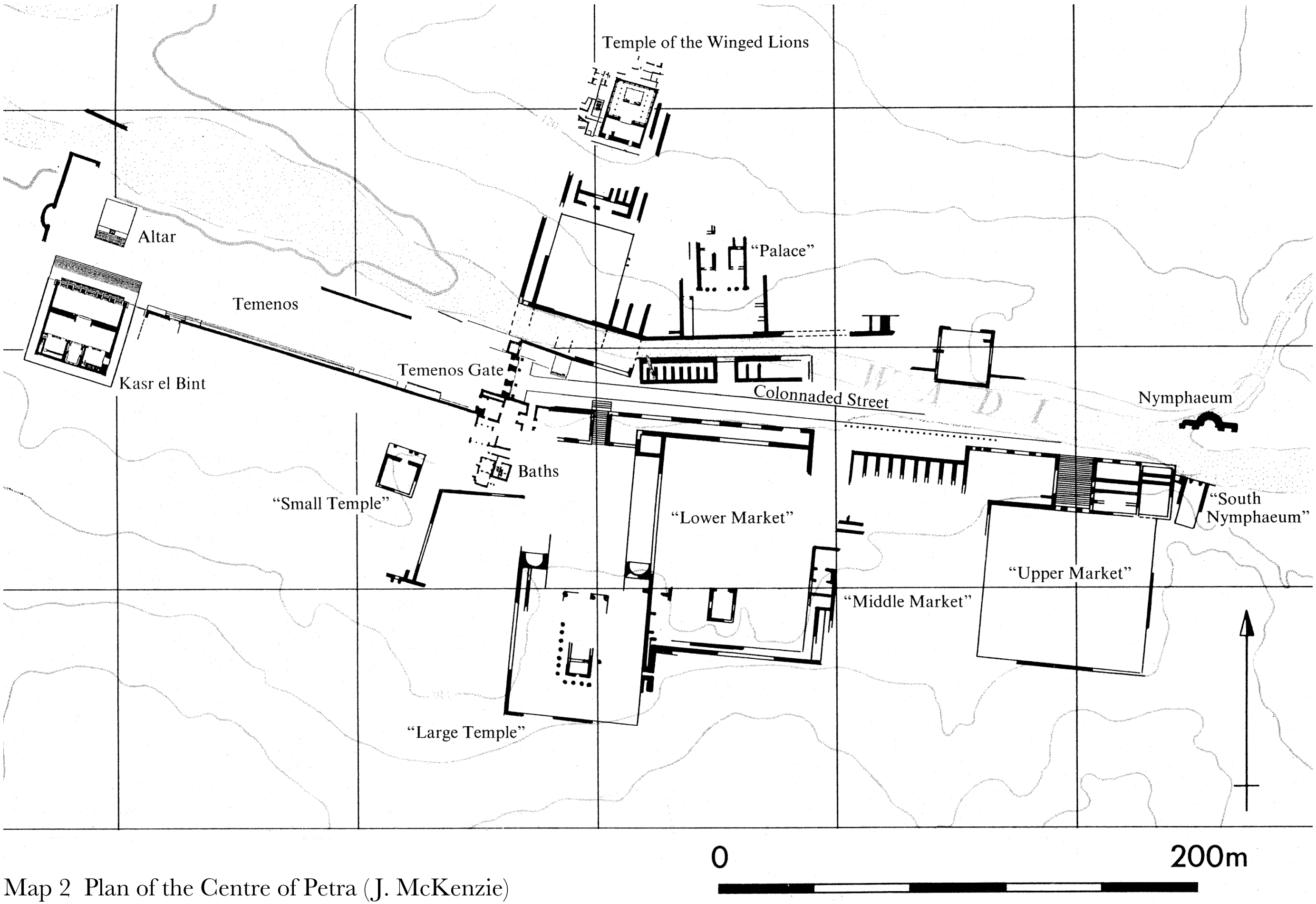
Christianity probably penetrated the Nabataean area, perhaps taken there by St Paul (Galatians 1:17), even before the end of the Nabataean state in 106, but it has left no trace at this early date, a fact which is hardly surprising given that the first traces of Christianity even in places like Jerusalem and Antioch are quite late. The supposed Safaitic evidence of Christianity is to be doubted (Macdonald 1992, 422). Later, Christianity took firm root in the area and Petra became a bishopric which was in due course represented at the various Church councils such as Nicaea. One of the most spectacular remains of Petra, excavated in the early 1990s, is a Byzantine church 26 m x 15 m, with mosaic pavements. Dated inscriptions in Greek point to the sixth century A.D. A large Greek papyrus archive has also been found (Joukowsky 1997).

It may be in part through this later Christian connection that some reports of Nabataean beliefs came to the Byzantine writers whom we have quoted from time to time. The orthodox Muslim theologians, like the Christian heresiologists before them, were keen to reject the pre-Islamic aberrations of the region and this, as we have seen, is a fortunate accident for our purpose since the Islamic writers also often mention details of the religious traditions of the Ḥijāz which throw light on earlier religious worlds like that of the Nabataeans.

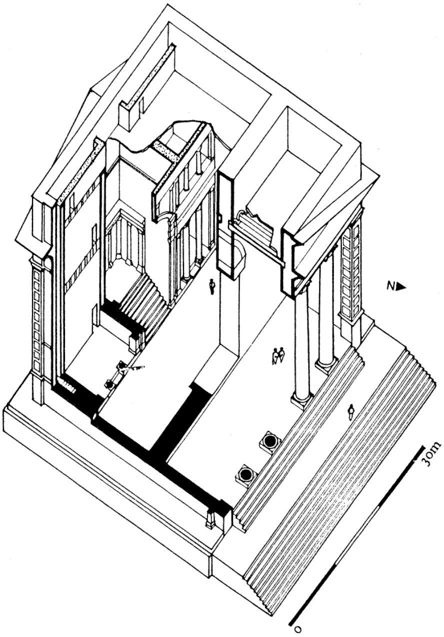
In the end, we have arranged the fragments of the mosaic and suggested what might have stood in the lacunae, sketching out thereby the overall picture. There is, however, so much that is uncertain. The only way that substantial progress will be made will be through the discovery not just of further inscriptions and further archaeology of the same kind as we have already, but continuous documents from the Nabataean period. There is a chance that such discoveries will be made at Petra or another site: recent discoveries of Byzantine Greek documents at Petra give hope of such discoveries. Short of such finds, the future of the study of Nabataean religion is likely to lie in the continuous sifting and reassessment of the known facts. This book is a modest episode in the iterative process of piecing together the mosaic.

MAP I

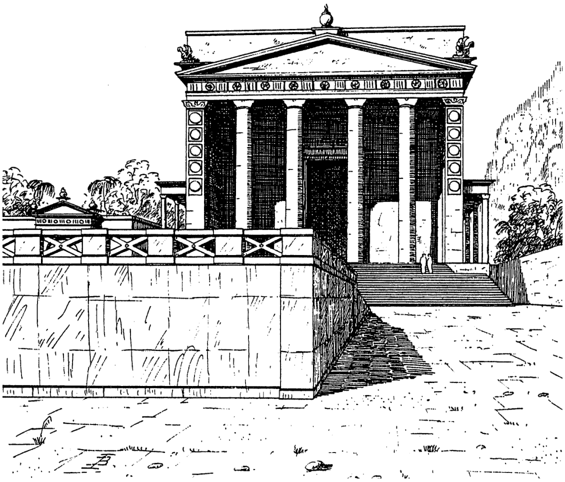

The Nabataeans and their Trade Routes
Damascus
Si'
Bosra
Jerash
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Gaza
Al-'Arish
Elusa
Qasrawet
Tannur
Darih
'Avdat
PETRA
Ramm
Al-Jawf
Bad'
Tebuk
Aynunah
Rawafah
Tayma'
RED SEA
Mada'in Salih (Hegra)
Al-'Ula
0 50 100km
Leuke Kome (?)


Temple of the Winged Lions
Altar
"Palace"
Temenos
Kasr el Bint
Temenos Gate
Colonnaded Street
W A D I
Nymphaeum
Baths
"Small Temple"
"Lower Market"
"South Nymphaeum"
"Upper Market"
"Middle Market"
"Large Temple"
0
200m

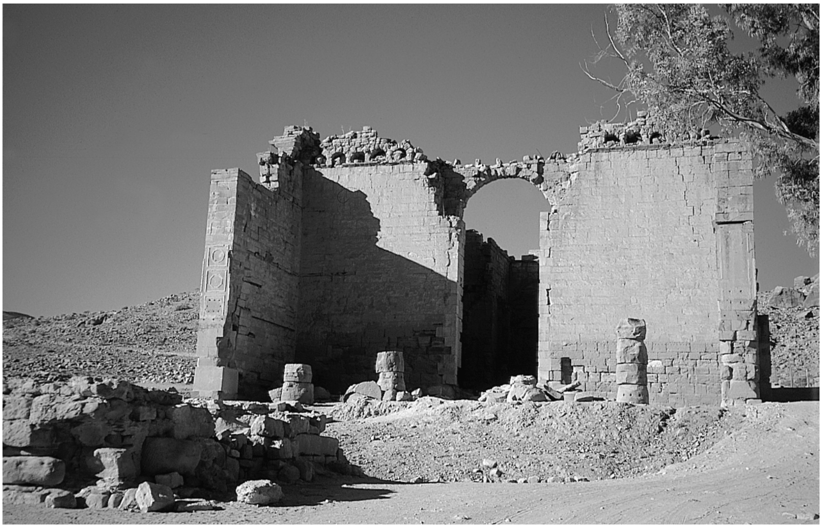
Map 2 Plan of the Centre of Petra (J. McKenzie)



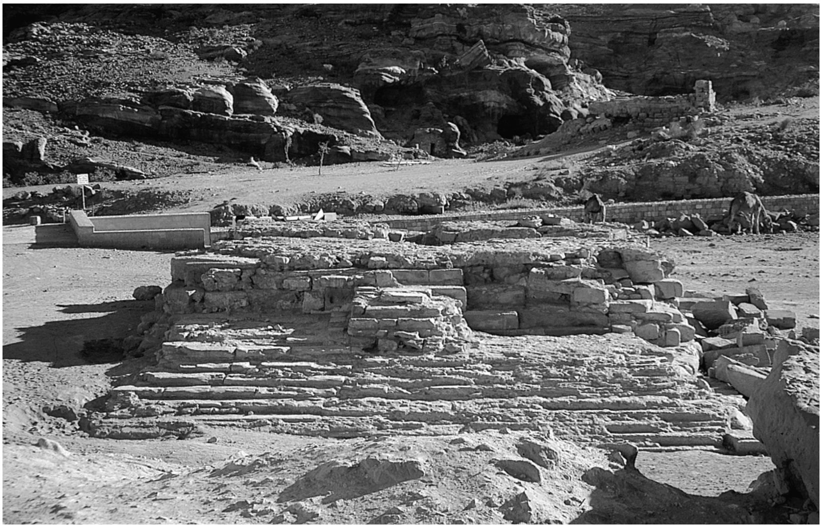
Ia The Qaṣr el-Bint Temple: Axonometric Reconstruction
(J. McKenzie after Gibson and Wright)



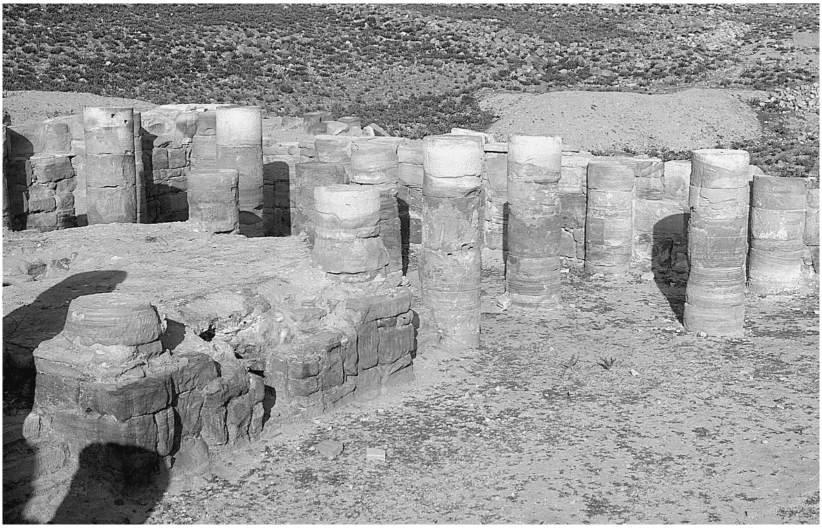
Ib The Qaṣr el-Bint Temple: Architectural Reconstruction
(I. Browning after Wright)



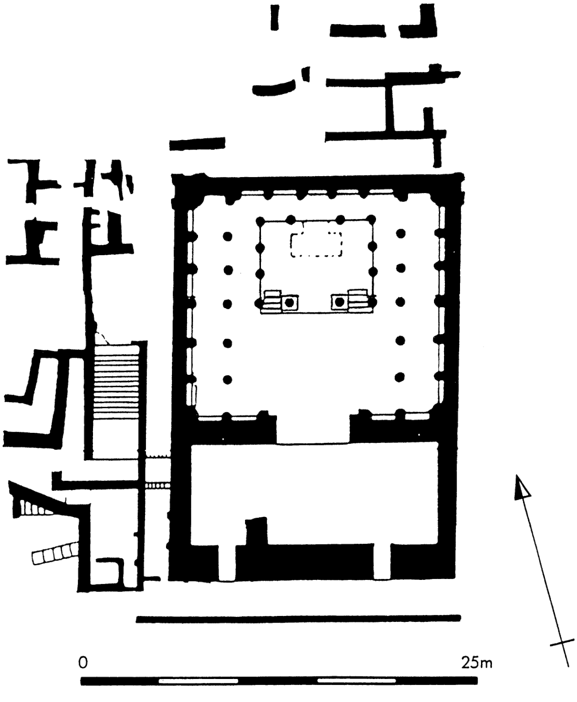
IIa The Qaṣr el-Bint Temple



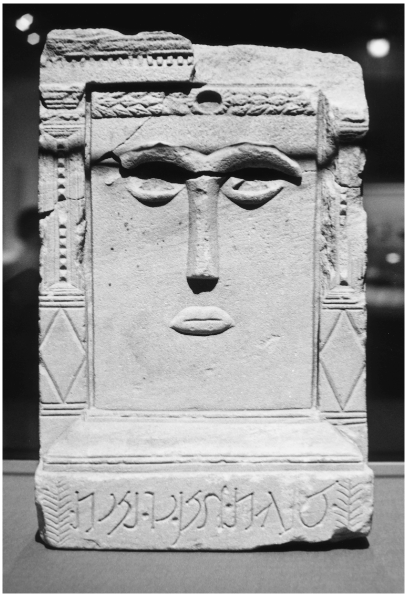
IIb Altar outside the Qaṣr el-Bint Temple



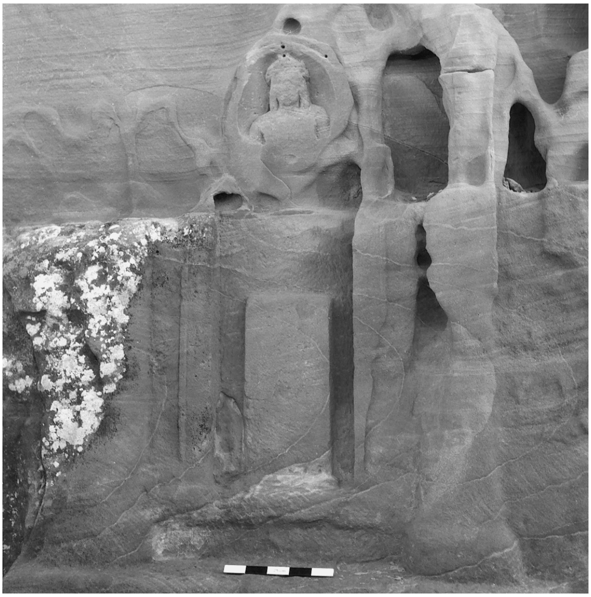
IIIa The "Winged Lions" Temple, Petra (K. Prag)



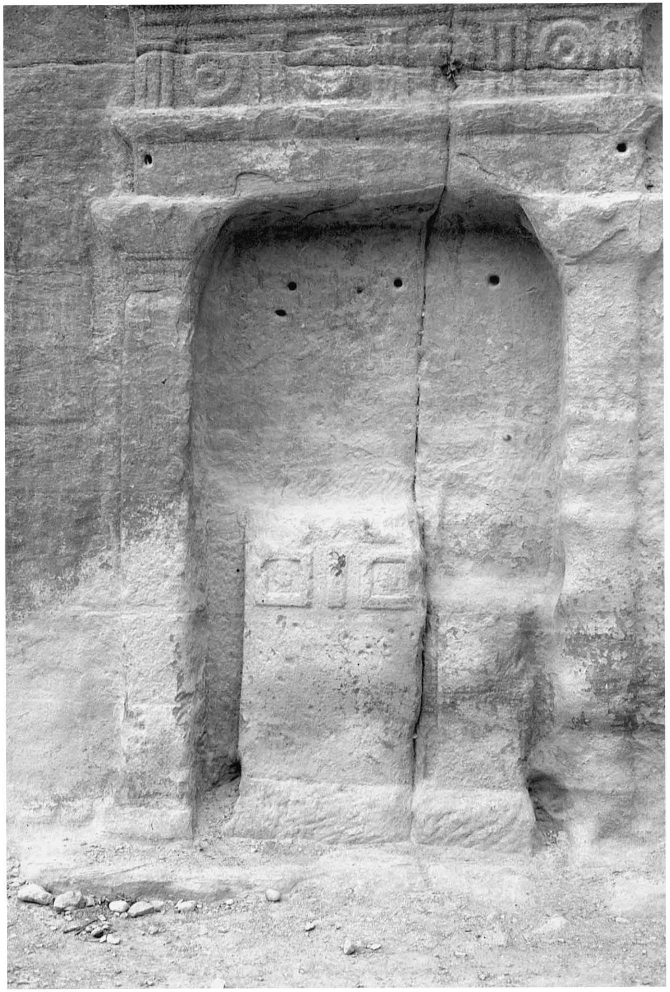
IIIb Plan of the "Winged Lions" Temple
(J. McKenzie after Hammond)



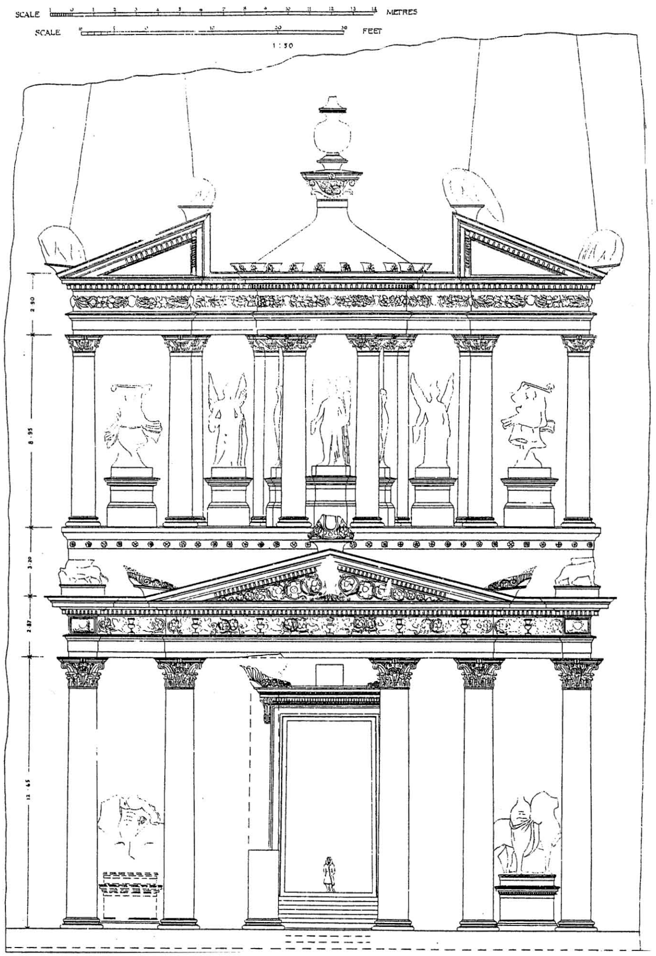
IVa Isis Figurine from "Winged Lions" Temple



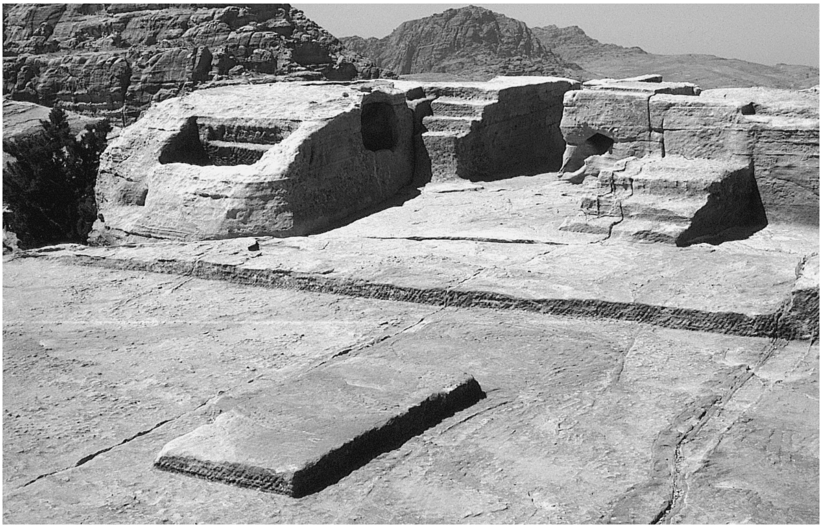
IVb The Dushara Medallion Niche (P. Hammond)



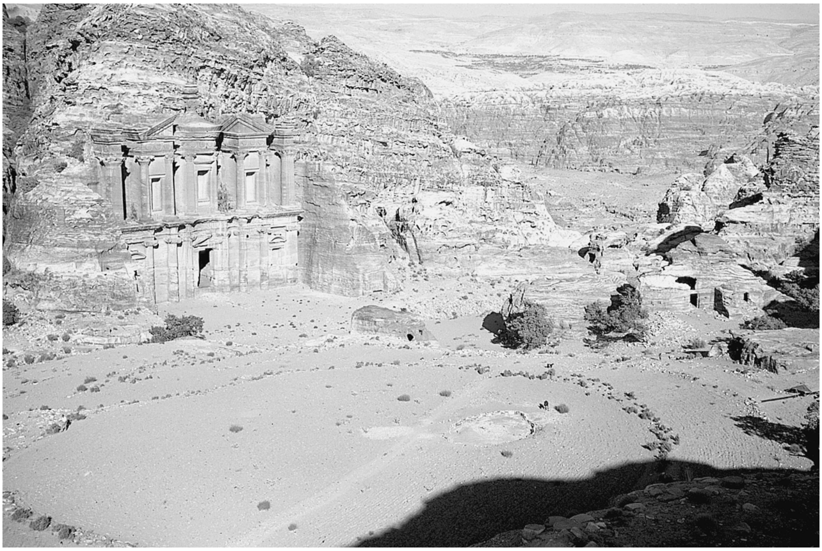
Va Idol in the Petra Sīq


SCALE
METRES
SCALE
FEET
1:50
2·90
8·95
3·20
2·87
12·65

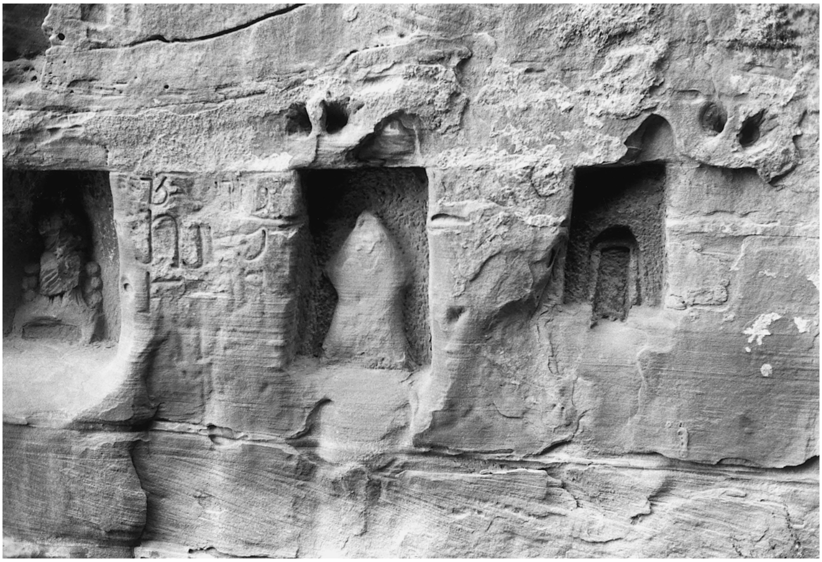
Vb The Khazneh, Petra (G. Dalman/J. Patrich)



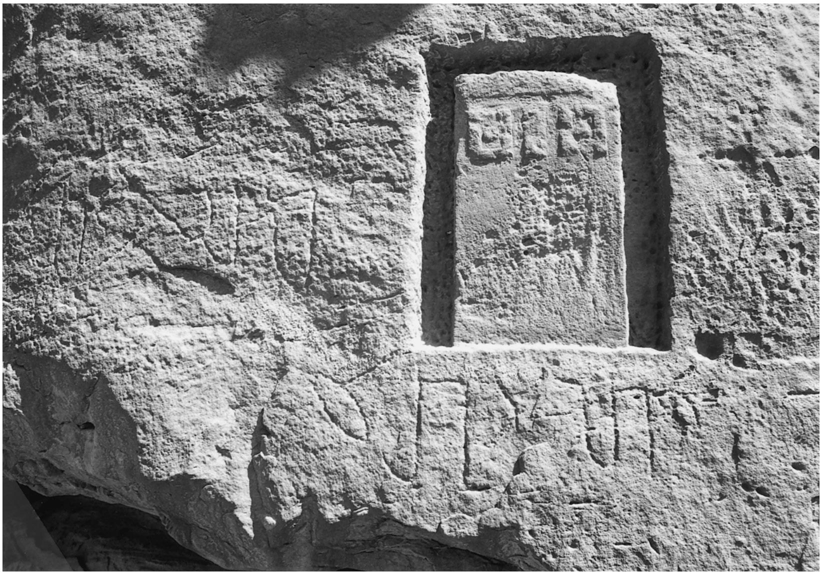
VIa The Madhbaḥ High-Place, Petra



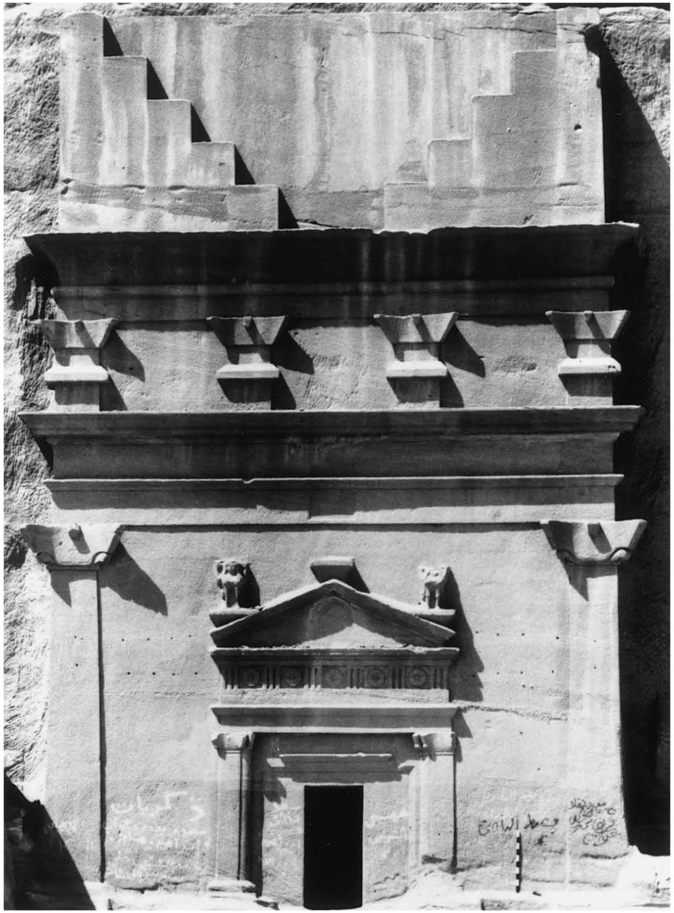
VIb The Deir Plateau (K. Prag)



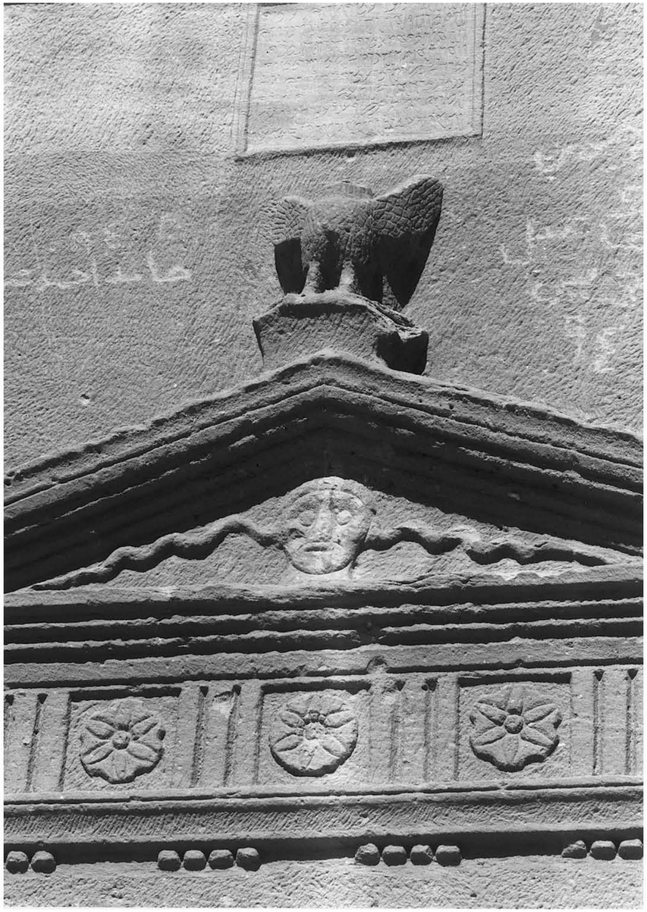
VIIa The Sidd el-Mrēriyyeh Cult-Platform of Isis
(H. Merklein/R. Wenning)



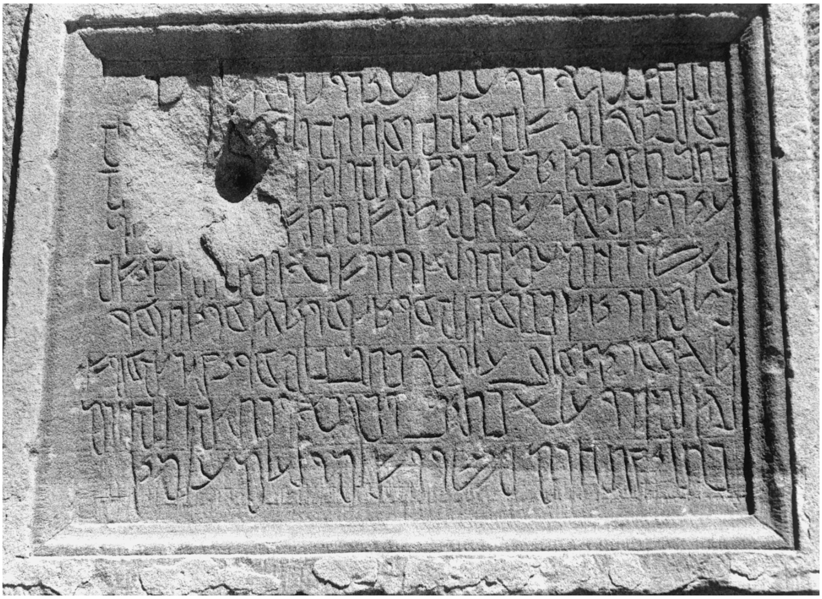
VIIb The Atargatis Idol and Insription in the Wādī es-Siyyagh
(R. Wenning)



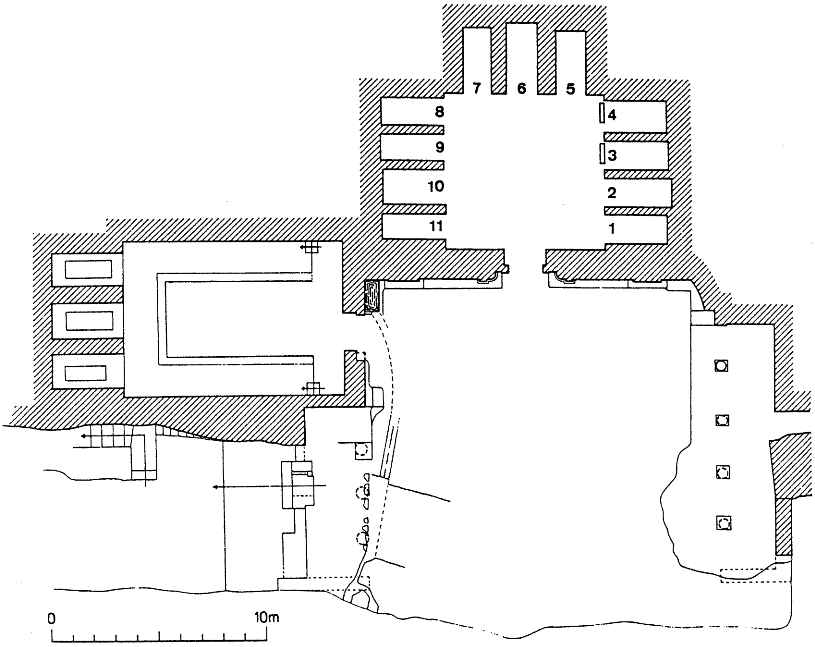
VIIIa Tomb Façade F 4 at Ḥegra



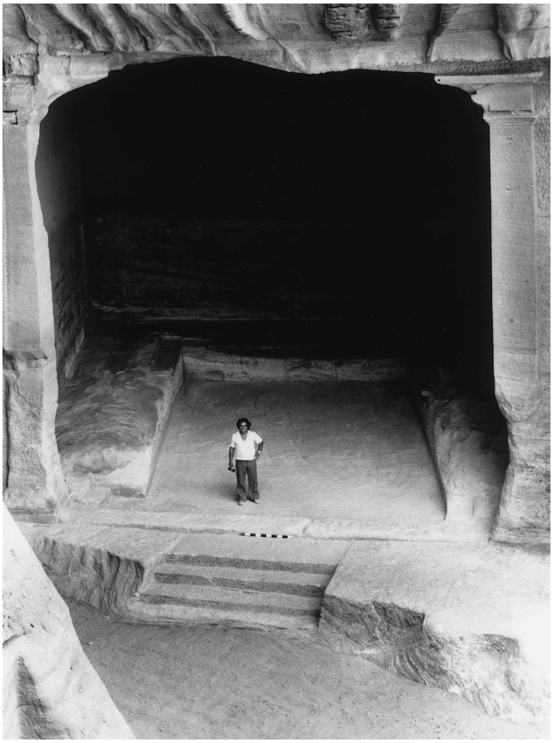
VIIIb Detail of Tomb B 23, Ḥegra



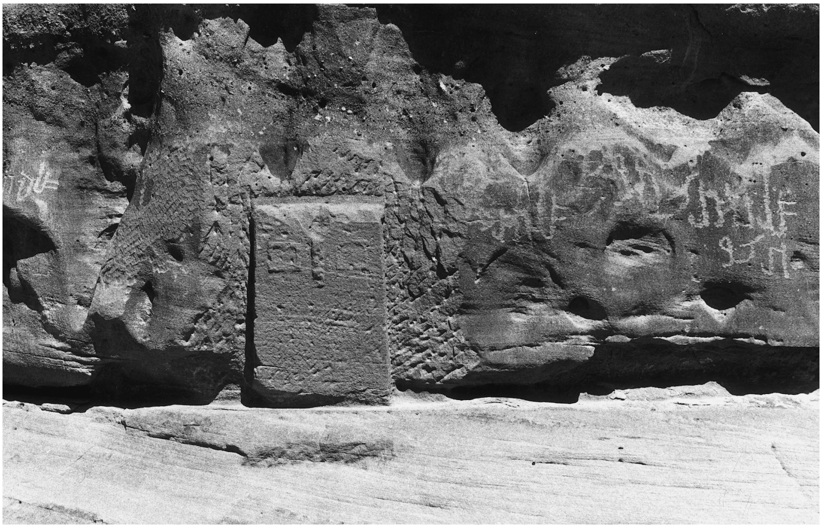
IXa Ḥegra Tomb Inscription H 8


7
6
5
8
4
9
3
10
2
11
1
0
10m

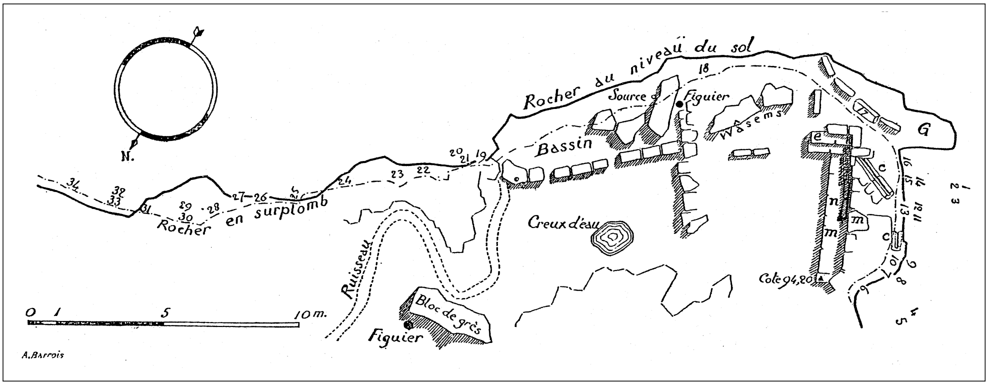
IXb Plan of Tomb 813, Petra (R. Wenning)



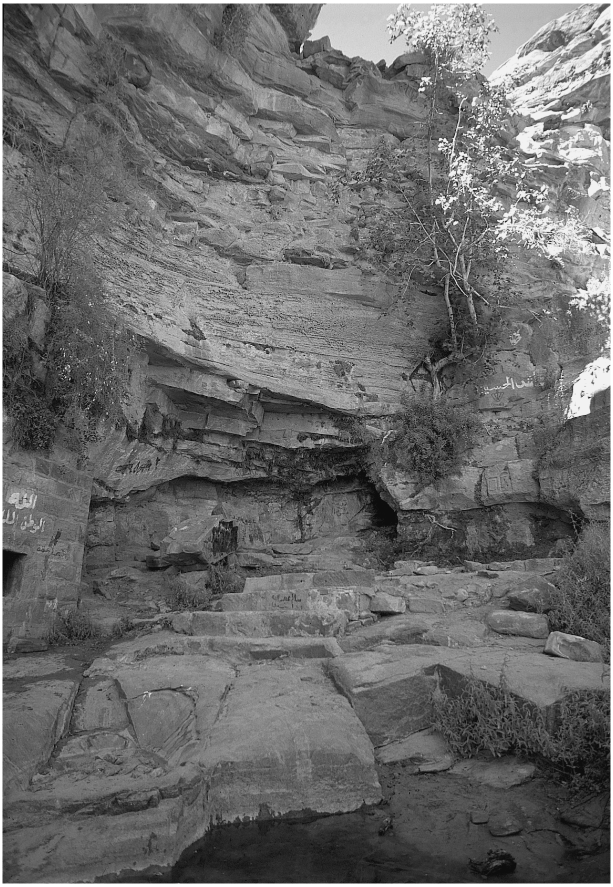
Xa The Dīwān *Triclinium* at Jabal Ithlib, Ḥegra



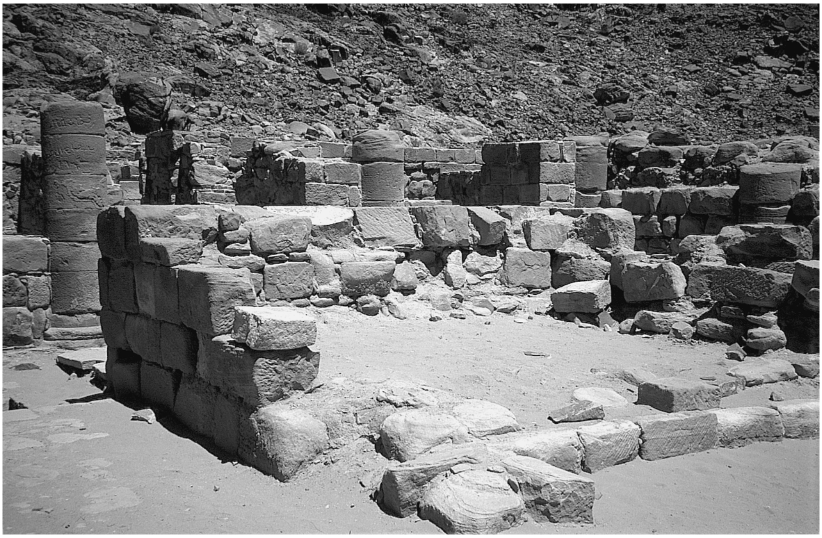
Xb Eye-Idol, Jabal Ithlib, Ḥegra


N.
Rocher au niveau du sol
Source
Figuier
Wasems
Bassin
G
Rocher en surplomb
Creux d'eau
Ruisseau
Bloc de grès
Figuier
Cote 94,20
e
c
n
m
m
c
0 1 5 10 m.
A. Barrois
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34

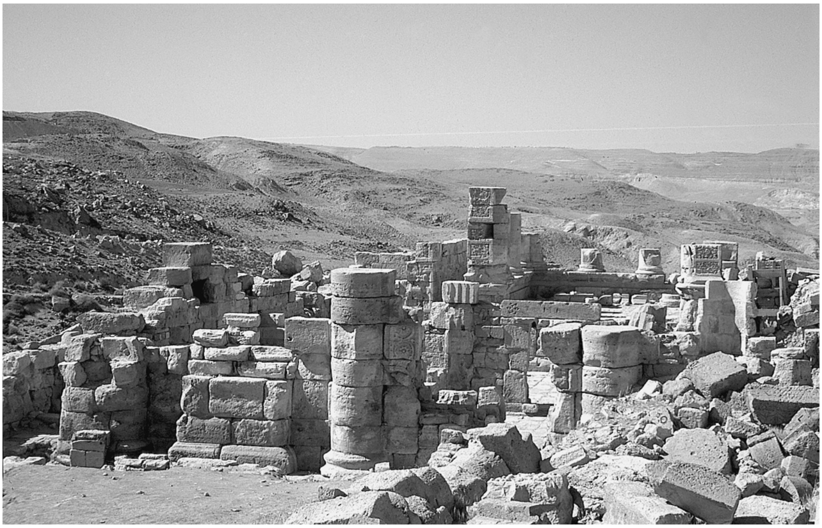
XIa Plan of the ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh Sanctuary (R. Savignac)



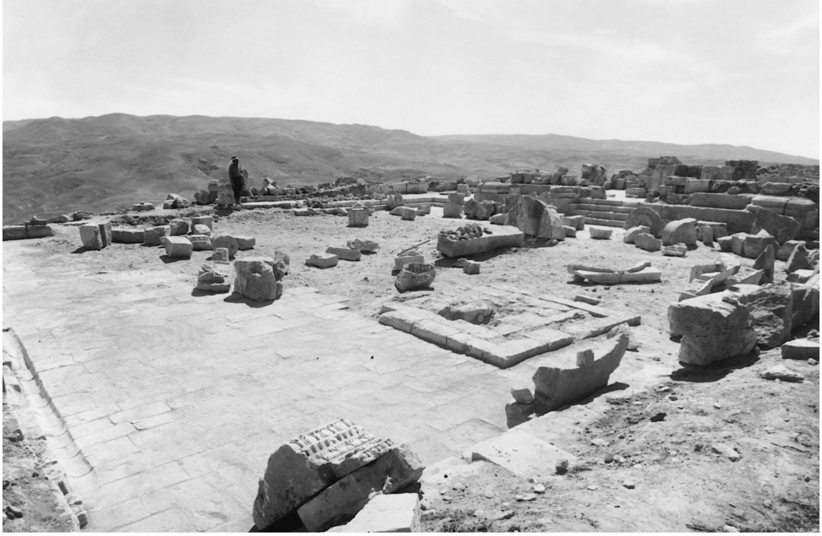
XIb The ʿAyn esh-Shallāleh Sanctuary (J. Taylor)



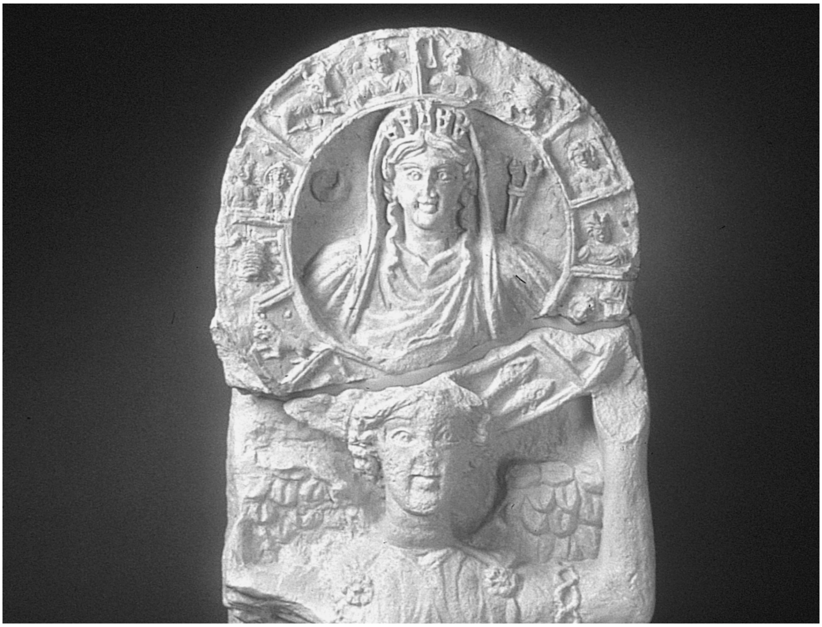
XIIa The Allāt Temple at Ramm



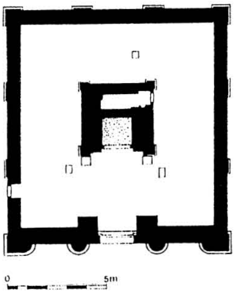
XIIb Khirbet edh-Dharīḥ Temple



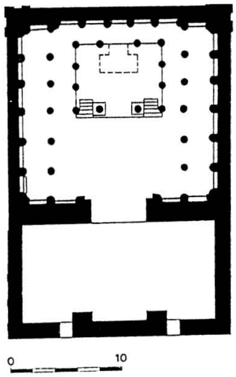
XIIIa The Temple Platform at Tannūr (Cincinnati Art Museum)



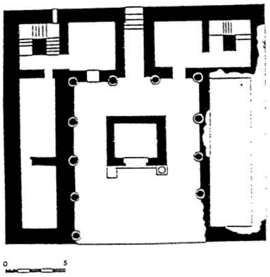
XIIIb The Dolphin Goddess from Tannūr (Cincinnati Art Museum)



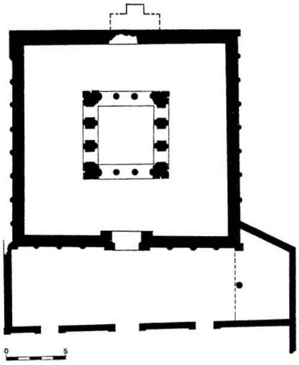
Tannūr



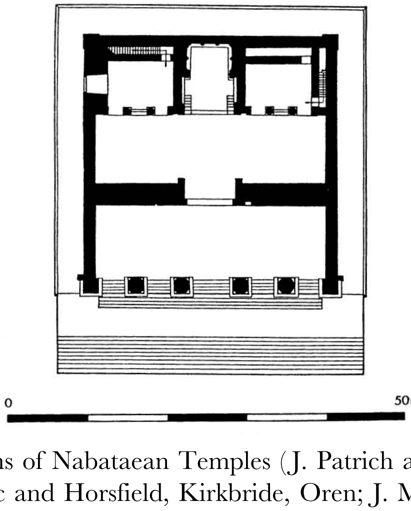
“Winged Lions” Temple, Petra



Ramm

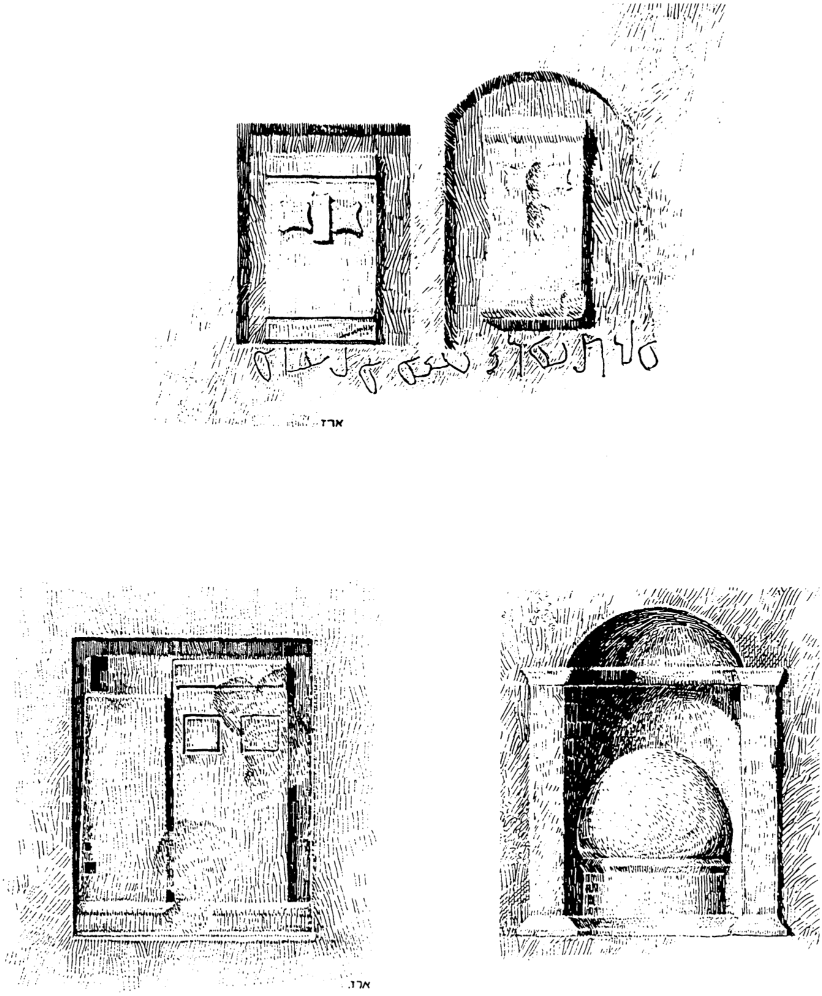


Qaṣrawet



Qaṣr el-Bint, Petra

XIV Plans of Nabataean Temples (J. Patrich after Glueck, Hammond, Savignac and Horsfield, Kirkbride, Oren; J. McKenzie after Wright)



XV Niches at Nabataean Sites (J. Patrich after Savignac and Dalman)

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Abbreviations other than standard abbreviations of journal titles

ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase)
DBS	*Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément*
EAEHL	*Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. M. Avi-Yonah and E. Stern)
EI	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*
HdO	*Handbuch der Orientalistik*
LCL	*Loeb Classical Library*
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (ed. L. Kahil et al.)
OEANE	*Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (ed. E. M. Myers)
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
PPUAES	*Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-1905 and 1909*
RAO	*Receuil d'Archéologie Orientale* (C. Clermont-Ganneau)
SHAJ	*Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*

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